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DIARY OF AN IDLE WOMAN IN CONSTANTINOPLE

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DIARY OF AN IDLE WOMAN IN CONSTANTINOPLE

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ac.

WITH MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

It seemed to me in visiting Constantinople that some revival of Greek-Byzantine and Turkish history, on the very sites where such thrilling scenes were enacted, might interest the general reader, and be serviceable to the traveller.

I found little of the kind in any of the current works which serve to guide the stranger.

I trust that I may, therefore, in a slight degree have supplied the want I myself felt, by grouping about the localities of the principal monuments some pictures of the chief historic events with which they are connected.

At least such has been my endeavour.

So little remains of the past in this much-destroyed city; and of that so little that is outwardly attractive or even intelligible, with the sole exception of St. Sophia, that without some such rapid reference the actual present is deprived of any link with what has gone before.

The splendours of ancient Byzantium and the meanness of modern Stamboul came to my mind as such a curious contrast it could only be understood by a reference to history; and I have endeavoured to describe all that I saw from this point of view, leaving to others the often repeated details of Harems, Bazaars, and Dervishes.

Whatever I may have said of Turkish cruelty and the crimes of the Sultans, I have invented nothing—I have simply reproduced the chronicles of the Old Seraglio, the details of modern reigns, and what I myself saw and heard.

My principal authorities have been Gibbon, Von Hammer, Lamartine, Théophile Gautier, Gallenga, Tacitus and Amicis; Meyer's 'Türkei und Griechevoice d,' a most valuable book; an article by H.E. Sir Henry Elliot on Abdul Aziz in the 'Nineteenth Century;' and various Handbooks, English and German.

FRANCES ELLIOT

November 1892.

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DIARY

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CHAPTER I

ARRIVAL—SEVEN TOWERS—BRIDGE OF GALATA

The Seven Towers—The revenge of the janissaries—A glimpse of the Golden Gate—The Seraglio—Depressed by first impression—A polyglot crowd—Comfort of a kavass—Crossing the bridge of Galata—The crowd is picturesque after all.

I TRAVEL by the Orient Express, incontestably the best train in Europe. I have passed Belgrade—quite a small modern town, and therefore utterly uninteresting—and in the distance Sofia, in a great undulating plain of intense green, shadowed by the irregular ranges of the Balkan Mountains,—a very small place with many pointed towers and spires, and, it is said, a better hotel than any in Constantinople. I have traversed two magnificent ravines in the Balkans, dark, deep, and narrow enough to keep out armies of invaders, and have entered that wild desolate tract of Turkey in Europe, which looks accursed

of dark plants and funereal cypresses, much moss and flying grasses clinging to its red stones.

The guard is talking to an old Turk, who, dressed in a long caftan, striped scarf, and green turban, signifying that he is a descendant of the Prophet, and is an object of respect, stands immovable as for his portrait. I am struck with the calm dignity of his deportment, and this impression strengthens on me more and more. It is not the dignity of civilisation, but of the desert, the self-possession inherited from the Kurd, living alone, in the solitude of the steppes, subject to no man, and indifferent to all.

The Seven Towers, though so chaotic now, were used as a State prison for some unfortunate Venetian ambassadors as late as 1714.

As old as the city, Constantine the Great strengthened and raised them, and his successor and imitator, Theodosius, added three more walls, still to be seen.

The blackening towers, heavy with age and damp, have a darker record than their stones; nothing is more repulsive than their history, which gives you the first taste of Asiatic barbarity, and reminds you that Europe and civilisation are left behind.

After the Turks came into possession at the siege of Constantinople, Mahomet II. at once accepted this locality as congenial to his blood-thirsty tastes, and made of the towers a strong

castle for his favourite janissaries, destined to become later the royal shambles—1458. Here, in a small open court, the heads of his victims were piled up until they reached the battlements, which, if you saw how high they were, you would better understand. In one of the Seven Towers a deep hole bore the ominous designation of 'The Well of Blood.' There were caves in the rock for torture, and that worse than torture, a lingering death.

The tyrannous janissaries, the successors of the sanguinary Prætorian Guard in the decline of the Western Empire, brought here such sultans as had incurred their high displeasure: it is a bloody tradition in Eastern history that no deposed sultan lives. Seven sultans have ended their lives within these dark walls, notably Othman II., whose vain efforts to overcome the tyranny of the janissaries cost him his life. The janissaries, who got wind of his intentions, were too many for him, seized upon his sacred person, as though he were a common malefactor, and carried him off to be strangled in their den. One feels almost a savage joy that these same janissaries were themselves cut off by a general massacre, though a sovereign is scarcely to be pitied who sets up archers and pages as living targets to keep his hand in practice.

Other illustrious heads have been suspended from these walls. To hang up a head was the fashion of those times, as at Tyburn not so

long ago, and to send a head round to distant governors a not unusual mode of apprising them of punishment. As I have said, ambassadors were confined here whenever it pleased the Sublime Porte to declare war against their states, a harrowing outlook for diplomacy!

Three of the Seven Towers have succumbed to the infirmities of an evil and mis-spent life, and have dropped helpless on the soil. The rest are tottering to an inevitable decay, greatly assisted by the excavations necessary for the safe passage of the Orient Express.

A few shabby Turkish soldiers wearing the fez loiter about the little station at which we linger, and stare sullenly at the inroad of the Giaour in the shape of the train.

In contrast to the hideous memories of the past, close at hand opens the Golden Gate (Aurea Porta). This was the triumphal entrance, erected by the second Theodosius in imitation of the Porta Triumphalis of Rome, by which the Greek emperors rode into Byzantium, passing by the Via Triumphalis and the Forum of Constantine to St. Sophia.

Here, amid a crowd of those servile and jewelled attendants, who made of the Greek Basileus a terrestrial deity, passed in imperial pomp Arcadius, with his brother Honorius. The Dacian Justin, the elder Justinian, with Belisarius by his side, the great warrior Heraclius, conqueror

of Persian Chosroes, the several Constantines, pale shadows of that great name, the Isaacs and Andronicus, Leo the Isaurian, the royal race of the Comneni, the Angeli and Palæologi, of whom Michael returned (a real triumph) to fill the throne after the expulsion of the five Latin intruders (I will not call them *emperors*), whom the Crusaders foisted in, and who wrought such evil to Byzantium; all passed here in the magnificent array proper to an Eastern potentate.

It is recorded that when Michael Palæologus reached the Golden Gate he dismounted and knelt before the image of the Virgin of the Blachernæ, which was carried before him, to signify that the mother of God herself was leading him to his restored throne.

I can just discern a walled-up arch, with Corinthian columns of greenish marble, flanked by two massive white towers; sculptured Roman eagles are in the cornice, and the Banner of the Labarum of the first Constantine. This is the Golden Gate.

Close to the dark group of the Seven Towers, on the water's edge, a steep ascent fills up the foreground, covered with a confused mass of sordid roofs and desolate gardens, behind which the lofty lines of the city walls mount with a most strange spring. These land walls, starting from the Seven Towers, continue along the whole length of the city, up and down in the

most precipitous and reckless course—some six miles to Eyoub, where the harbour of the Golden Horn ends in a little river, which lends its chief charm to the valley of the Sweet Waters of Europe, enclosed within a rounded basin of low green hills.

I pinch myself with disgust at my indifference, but my blood is calm. I feel indignant, not only at the ruthless destruction of ancient things, but at the lack of colour.

The East, indeed! Where is it? We are at the end of May, but no colour rests on the walls which rise around, in a network of wretched little houses. None in the tiny gardens, or on the rugged banks, crumbling downwards. Nor on tree or plant, or on the domes of the small mosques we pass, with slenderest of minarets, for this is a degraded part of Stamboul.

All Northern! Hopelessly Northern! And small as a doll's house.

I hate the common little buildings, not two alike in the whole city, piled one on the other, as if they were a puzzle without room to set it out. The diminutive windows half-closed with carved wooden shutters to conceal the harem. The unheard-of squalor in every opening and alley, not so much actual filth as hideous mouldiness and ruin.

. . . . . .

We pass two towers in the walls, by which

we slowly glide, that bear the name of Vlanga-Bostan, or landing-place, recalling the faithful services of the Gothic guards of the Greek emperors, this being their *bostan* or quay, and there are peeps and indications of the sparkling blue of the Bosphorus, and the piled-up hills of white houses on the opposite shore.

Now we are under the old Seraglio wall, and glimpses come of lofty cypresses massed black as night, and minarets and domes and wooden pointed roofs, revealing in a richer and more wondrous measure the presence of the city.

The old Seraglio! What a name! A place of love, murder, beauty, ambition, and torture through so many ages; of dark trees and gleaming walls, fretted fountains, gilded kiosks and enchanting halls, fair open spaces, greenly planted lawns, and sombre gloomy courts. *What* have they not seen?

It is said that a funnel shooting out from under gorgeous Eastern chambers lined with gold, and opening at a postern out at sea (for water is all around), disposed of fickle beauties and troublesome viziers, first bow-strung in the palace by the hideous mutes—a legacy from the Greek emperors—then tied in a sack and shot out into the silent bosom of the Bosphorus.

Who knows? Death walked with life, beauty with decay, in this charming abode, where love, despair, hope, agony, and ambition strove with

each other! These are the tragedies of Eastern life, so short, so cruel! No Western sentiment to turn the edge, and clothe even murder with the poetry of passion. The crude, naked crime, the force of animal lust, the fell gripe of tyranny! These days are past with the power of evil. The Seraglio exists no more, save in its outward features, and sultans are now governed by the force of public law.

. . . . . .

It so chances that I arrive during the feast of Bairam, after the fast of Ramazan, corresponding to our Lent and Easter (but a thousand times more rigid, for the Turk obeys his creed, and during Ramazan neither eats, nor drinks, nor smokes until sunset).

As we pass, the whole city seems to have turned out to make universal holiday, arrayed in clothes of every possible tint, except green (which is sacred). The love of colour is quite African : scarlet, blue, yellow, brilliant lilac, and mauve are mingled in the wildest way.

Few turbans are visible, almost all wear the fez, long-tailed caftans or coats of cotton with patterns to be seen a mile off, gorgeous undervests of burning crimson or blazing yellow, a scarf twisted many times round the waist, and stripes and patterns of all kinds in such a conglomeration of shades that you become colour-blind, and do not perceive what a dazzle it all

is. Of rich stuffs I see none. Everything is as common as the people of this suburb, all screaming, crying, and moving like a Judy-show in action.

High on a broken bank some women sit under coloured parasols, looking at their children playing about, dressed in satin, some white, some ruby, their little frocks clinging round their feet and impeding their movements. But the crowd is so vulgar, the surroundings so mean, I cannot abide it. It is a scene of low opéra comique.

I observe that the veil is a mere pretext, only in fact covering the lips and forehead, and in most cases so thin that it leaves the face almost bare. I see no pretty women as I pass in the train, still following under the walls, for you advance a good distance into the city before reaching the Stamboul terminus.

A dreary depression seizes me, not at all diminished by glimpses of the opposite bank of the Golden Horn, low and insignificant, covered to the water's edge with heterogeneous masses of building and shapeless walls, forming the Christian quarters of Pera and Galata. Here and there a gigantic warehouse or embassy, or a mediæval tower of grey stone crowned with arches and turrets built by the Genoese, stands out—a triton among minnows. In a bare space, half-way up the Hill of Pera, I see groups of cypresses, which I know indicate a burial-ground, and

woods and gardens leading off on the hills in picturesque lines.

But oh, how low these hills! How flat! How unimpressive! What a mass of walls, shapeless and void as was this earth before creation! Is this Constantinople of which I have heard so much?

But for the ruins of the Seven Towers (themselves a history), by land and sea so impressive, and the mosque of St. Sophia, the complete absence of any vestige of antiquity in Stamboul is really distressing. Already I feel it. The vast monuments of this once powerful capital of the Christians are now reduced by the Turks to a few fragments, foundations, and subterranean walls.

Ruin more complete, more ruthless, never was beheld. Absolute, sordid ruin, without dignity or pathos. Dust, dirt, neglect, and noise everywhere; not for a moment is the mind permitted to *rest* itself in peace.

No quiet, no repose! A train rushes by, a passing cart raises clouds of dust out of the dry soil, a troop of Turkish children try to finger you, a party of Turkish equestrians scamper by who almost upset you. A dragoman at your heels, whom you must have for protection, and for the necessary formalities, mumbles incessantly in a sort of pigeon English; the cries of vendors of cakes and water, the grunts of the Persian

and Armenian *hamals* (porters) with their heavy loads, the click of the laden horses and donkeys, tottering under piles of bricks and wood, make up a discord enough to crush the spirit out of the most enthusiastic stranger.

But I am anticipating.

The terminus is an elongated shed built on a barren waste. I am bound to say the unspeakable Turk is building another of stone close at hand. In a moment we are surrounded by a scarecrow crowd, screaming in Greek, Italian, Turkish, French (to live here you must be a polyglot, and command the idioms of the East and West, or be silent for ever), out of which advance the Turkish officials, quite European save for a fez; a scene of absolute squalor backed by the foul station.

A pale little man vainly struggles among the dark-skinned Armenians and big-nosed Greeks, trying to board the train. Not succeeding, he stands apart and calls out in a shrill voice, high over the eastern gutturals making a chorus round, 'I am Cook's man; I can speak English.'

Blessed little man! What a boon to travellers who arrive without friends or preparation! I am told the *douane* is a fearful struggle, and the Turk quite mediæval in boorish stupidity.

But I who write suffered none of these things. Cook's excellent little agent was to me as naught, for had I not there, before my eyes, the stalwart

form of the *kavass* of the English Embassy, a fine dark-complexioned Greek, of excellent presence, in a close-fitting jacket, covered with gold lace, a richly-worked dagger at his waist?

With what a sense of command he kept off the rabble, and how proud I felt of belonging to him! Here, amid the surging waves of that ill-smelling mob (now increased by the passengers who had descended), I blessed the kindness of the Ambassador, who extended the flag of our Empire to me, a lone woman with a maid, in the middle of dirty Stamboul!

All make way before me; no question is asked. The kavass puts all back with a lordly motion of his hand, and at once places me in an excellent landau in waiting. Aloft, on the shoulders of broad porters in long petticoats, with bare legs and feet, a coloured sash round their loins to hold all together, soar my boxes (all accomplished in a chorus of incredible screams) to be deposited in a two-horse fiacre which follows my landau. I am the more particular in detailing this, because I find a certain terror exists as to arriving at Constantinople.

The god-like calm with which the kavass treats everyone, including myself, whom he evidently looks on as a being of an inferior order whom he is sent to convey—in the sense that a lion may take care of a poor little mouse—greatly impresses me.

With the same sublime repose (all arrangements having been made and *bakshish* duly distributed) he mounts the box of my landau, to my extreme surprise (I was prepared to give him the best place inside), and gives the signal of departure without cracking of whips or other ceremony, on the most execrable road I ever was shaken on in my life. There are holes in Spanish highways in which a small cart could be accommodated, but in Turkey freshly split rocks are a novelty one would willingly dispense with.

I pass a mosque, a real mosque, the first I have seen, of respectable proportions, but by no means lovely.

Stone water troughs, as if for cattle, are placed all round, and in them pious Moslems are performing their ablutions, which apparently consist in a severe washing of head and hands. Ablution, like all other forms of religious rites, is evidently much or little in proportion to the zeal of the believer.

. . . . . .

Now we emerge in the full evening splendour of the setting sun on the great drawbridge of Galata, rough and unfinished in itself, but marvellous in contrasts — the bridge that binds Europe with Asia, civilisation with barbarism, Christianity with Mahomedanism, the bitter hate of the past with the iron prejudices of the present—

and a busy present, too, with a movement, a life, a clamour, that arouses you with a flash.

Between avenues of great steamers and ships from every country, you pass slowly—the crazy boards creaking beneath—upon a sea of waters pressing on, in front, behind, and on either hand, barges, caiques, launches, and boats shooting about in all directions. The Golden Horn is a very land of waters, dividing the city; Stamboul on the southern side climbing a range of hills for a length of five miles, Pera and Galata on the northern, dazzling white. Beyond is a vast archipelago, bordered by the flowery shores of Scutari, and studded by those little gems, the Prince's Islands, opening into the Sea of Marmora, with a background of snow-tipped mountains over Broussa, the cradle and capital of the Turk. Asiatic Scutari, opposite, is so near that it forms in fact a quarter of the city, amphitheatred by dark woods; innumerable white-walled mosques, kiosks, palaces, and houses clothing the heights, and fringing the shore for miles and miles, like blanched flowers on the flood. To the near right, as I cross the bridge, is the landing-stage of Tophane, massed with dark lines of shipping anchored on a quay, which extends inland, far out of sight, up to the harbour of the Golden Horn (the reason of which name no man can fathom), where the navies of the world may lie in peace.

On the Stamboul side from which I come is

the long dark point of the Seraglio, running far out into the water, crowned with its dark mysterious groves, so weird and beautiful, from wherever they are seen, uprising to the low line of hills, on which lies Stamboul, now the hotbed of the Turk, the seat of such power as still remains to him, and the refuge of his cynicism and superstition. To Stamboul the cities on the opposite bank are but as suburbs, Christian and Moslem, massed with buildings as far as the eye can reach, the Moslem side crowned by a noble line of mosques with gilded minarets; foremost St. Sophia, with a pinkish tinge on its piled up parapets, the only shade of colour in this white mass. The mosques of Ahmed, Bajazet, Suleiman, Mahmoud and Selim form a grand but monotonous procession—the fashion of the mosque being prohibitive of much display of art or sculpture—with the high white tower and palace of the Seraskier, the very modern official residence of the Minister of War, standing out on a vast empty terrace which some great conflagration has cleared. On the highest turret of the white tower, a perpetual watchman is placed to signal if any fire has broken out.

What most impressed me next to the blue world of waters was the prodigious mass of amphitheatred houses on the hills on either side of the Golden Horn, ever drawing landwards to lose itself in green and pleasant hills.

Trees too, for trees are everywhere in Turkey,

and, like charity, cover many sins with the charm of their verdure, are abundant, even in closely packed Stamboul.

A cemetery is a joy here, for it means groves and trees. On the Pera side also, dark cypresses clothe cleft heights, and verdant spaces lend a charm of nature to the confused mass of walls.

Yet, however picturesque, the extreme lowness of the pitch eliminates any element of grandeur. But for the crescent flags flying from the masts, looking seawards, I might fancy myself in the estuary of the Clyde. Indeed I am continually reminded of Scotland on the Bosphorus, the solitary rock of Leander, as it is called, midway in the Archipelago, answering to the escarped fortress of Dumbarton, which parts the lines of the low rounded headlands, and the softly undulating hills, opening at the entrance of the Gareloch, before Greenock.

. . . . . .

Meanwhile the boards creak, the joints heave up and down, showing the water underneath. The bridge of Galata is no better than a common drawbridge after all, but it is a marvellous gathering of the nations. English, with white umbrellas and low hats, pass by; Armenians, with coloured sash glaring out of rags, bearing the usual heavy load; veiled women, with long draping mantles and head-piece, daintily stepping on high-heeled slippers; the first I saw walked

majestically, her head high in the crowd—among them, if not of them, a common woman all the same, as no Turkish lady would be seen in public unattended by slaves—servants, I ought to say, as slavery is not supposed to exist; Greeks in white petticoats and gold embroidered vests; Frank ladies with hats and parasols; blind beggars in threadbare turbans, stretching out sunburnt hands for *bakshish*; jolly tars with glazed hats jauntily cocked on one side; fat Pashas under sunshades held by secretary or attendant; a Persian, dyed by Eastern suns, in sheep-skin cap and furred pelisse, though the weather is sultry; donkeys and lean horses invisible under every sort of load; Albanian sellers of sesame, honey, and sweets; Greek and Bulgarian fruit-sellers (and oh! what tempting strawberries); itinerant butchers, the family joints lading a skinny horse; negroes; news-criers; boys waiting beside a crowd of horses saddled for hire; and, in marked contrast to all these, handsome Greek ladies in elegant landaus, and beys and officers in fez trotting by (your real Turk rides like a cross-country man: nothing can unseat him or upset the horse). Here an old Turk, with a tray of sweetmeats on his head, a little stool in hand wherewith to improvise a shop; there water carriers with jugs covered with fresh leaves; Orientals in caftan and turban visible a mile off; Dervishes in white turbans, and long dark caftans

—everyone occupied, but leisurely, without haste, as if time were their own.

Carts roll by drawn by mules and donkeys, or sometimes a cow. Excellent fiacres, shut and open, and elegant private carriages, all moving in an incessant stream, to which add the shrill whistle of arriving and departing steamers (and their name is legion), the loud rumble of the wheels on the creaking bridge, the cries and shouts of every vendor of every possible article, the keen shriek of the beggars, and the hum of hundreds upon hundreds of voices, and you realise the bridge of Galata as I passed it towards the end of May.

CHAPTER II

PROGRESS TO THE HÔTEL ROYAL

The degraded pariah dogs—Turkish cemeteries better at a distance—We labour up the hill of Pera—Engulfed amongst Greek waiters—The marvellous charm of water—The Greek is ubiquitous—The Jew is not appreciated.

Now we plunge into the tortuous alleys of Pera and Galata, running into each other with no perceptible break, by streets steep and narrow to a degree no one would believe ; yet the little Turkish horses mount them at a gallop.

Miserable-looking open shops, about the size of cupboards, line the way, but I see no one cross-legged, neither kalendars, sons of kings, nor Aladdins with lamps—old or new; you must visit the bazaar and the close alleys of Stamboul to realise the Arabian Nights.

The whole scene, as we scraped up over the rocks (stones I cannot call them), is ragged, untidy, and trumpery to a degree; coloured papers flying in the little shops as flags, and everything unharmonious, grating, and vulgar.

The road is so narrow, it is incredible accidents do not happen, yet the pariah dogs, with whom I have already become acquainted, stray

about in all directions, and by a sort of instinct manage to get out of the way. I actually saw a yellow beast sleeping calmly on the narrow ledge between two trams in rapid motion.

A tram cannot get out of the way, but from other vehicles the dogs are safe. A Turkish driver would rather go a mile than run over one of these mangy mongrels, which lack all the characteristics of a dog except its voracity.

The Koran teaches that life is never to be destroyed uselessly (a precept applying seemingly only to animal life). Men and women may have their throats cut with impunity, especially if they are Christians, but horses, birds, and dogs are safe, especially the dog, who leads a charmed life. But even they might struggle and die in agony before a Turk (however pitiful and humane) would raise his hand to shorten their sufferings. It is after all but a blind and stupid humanity.

The dogs seized upon my imagination then and there, and became a great grief to me. Never could I imagine an animal so endeared to us by its intelligence and attachment sunk to such degradation!

To me nothing is more beautiful than the love of approbation in a dog. It is this, the conviction that he is loved and applauded, which gives him such a charm, the dancing happy eye, the wagging inquiring tail, the jocund leap, the gay career. He looks up and reads in your glance

that he is approved, and he leaps with innocent joy, and turns gratefully to lick the hand he loves. Now these thousands of miserable city curs, which hang about the streets, keeping themselves together in groups of six and eight, buried in sand and mud, or stretched on the stones, have never known one kind word, or felt the caressing touch of a human hand.

The Turks have no real sympathy with animals, and though these mongrels are fed from houses and mosques, the food is flung to them as offal to a beast. And as such they devour it!

They rarely bark, they never wag their tails, never look at you as you pass, and if you do catch a turn of the dead sullen eye, it is totally without expression.

Every dog feels its degradation—feels it, and suffers.

The depressing effect of it on me I cannot express. That a creature, created to be a companion of man, should become hideous, swollen, diseased—an object of repulsion, is horrible. As we pass I see one little brute making its way up a side street with a brood of pups following, to a stone step in the sill of a ruined door—evidently their home and kennel, but how they live and increase is a mystery known only to themselves.

The late Sultan Aziz, who built so many ugly palaces on the Bosphorus, and had the biggest harem of his time, having travelled in

Europe, felt the disgrace of these pariah dogs, and wanted to send them to a barren island, where they would have starved. Then the chief Imaum of the City came to him and said, 'The Koran commands the protection of all beasts, and it will be a breach of religion if the Commander of the Faithful departs from this rule.' To which the Sultan, fearing a revolt, at once yielded, and commanded that they should remain, and there they still are, to the disgrace of the city.

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Why the dismal graveyard half-way up the Hill of Pera, a kind of mortuary station (at this point the road takes a sharp turn and the panting horses are allowed a moment of rest), is called the 'Petit Champ des Morts,' I cannot imagine. French is a language little prevalent here, except at Court, yet Petit Champ des Morts everyone calls it.

Anyway it is my first sight of a Turkish cemetery and revolts me by its look of cynical desolation. There is no wall or gate to protect it from the high road.

Scattered and thinly clothed cypresses rise over the rough ground, spread with what appear to be mile-stones, a turban carved on the top, coloured or plain as the case may be; some decapitated, some smashed, and all tumbling about in every direction.

Anything more revolting in the centre of a great town cannot be conceived. Without so

much as a light fence to guard it from the thousands of passengers, carriages, carts, horses, mules, and porters—a rush, a noise, a hurry insulting to the dead.

Pell mell, they lie, these silent ones, under the cypresses, their tombs placed up and down the hill, without order or symmetry—like some human fungus which sprouts out where it can.

Broken paths and tracks among the shrivelled grass and weeds, formed apparently from the *débris* of the stones, break the surface. Now and then a slight barrier surrounds a central pillar crowned by a turban, and a dozen or more small pillars grouped near—the graves of a bey or pasha, his wives and infant children around in a mortuary kind of harem.

If, as it is said, a people is to be judged by the respect shown to the dead, Turkey is of all nations the most uncivilised.

The open spaces, and they are many and foul, are the haunt of all the hideous beggars and idlers, to say nothing of the dogs, piling themselves at ease in yawning holes, looking into which one shudders! Of what horrors is not a pariah dog capable?

An olive-skinned Turk with a dirty turban and soiled scarf smokes cross-legged on the ground; another sleeps stretched on his back under the trees; a passer-by carries a tray of sweetmeats on his head.

In a corner, divested of his caftan, a devotee is spreading his carpet for evening prayer; suddenly he draws himself up, and then, by an acrobatic movement quite incomprehensible, his forehead touches the ground.

On these hills of Galata and Pera there are ambassadorial palaces, warehouses, mansions, vast magazines and shops, where all the business of Constantinople is transacted; but in Stamboul the miserable wooden shanties which form the bulk of the narrow streets and close alleys (an open gutter in the middle), leading to the bazaar and other important localities, are not to be conceived of as places of business. What can be done in rows of so-called shops which are nothing but a wooden box open at one end, with just room enough for a Turk to sit cross-legged on a board, the goods he has to sell within arm's length around him?

Nothing is built of stone except the Seraglio, the mosques, the palaces of the Sultan, the residences of the various ambassadors, the barracks, the Galata tower, and a few private residences of Greek or English bankers and merchants.

These stand apart, and for a good reason. Wooden houses are like tinder to the flames. Fifty thousand have been consumed in a few hours in conflagrations constantly taking place.

From the tower on the hill, the highest

summit of Stamboul, the alarm is given by ever present watchers. A gun is fired, a red balloon raised at night, a coloured flag by day, to indicate the quarter in which the fire has broken out. After dark the gruff voice of the watchman chants it out. Then from every direction come runners to apprise the firemen, who rush with their engines, attended by soldiers, with long iron hooks to tear down the adjacent buildings.

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Again we start from the Petit Champ des Morts up the stony ascent, and although we drag along laboriously, the horses are never urged or whipped.

I give a glance at the back of the dragoman, seated on the box. He is erect and motionless as a statue, his gloved hand resting on the richly-chased dagger at his waist.

How he must hate me for giving him this trouble!

Afterwards I come to know he is in the habit of attending the ambassadress as her *chasseur* whenever she goes abroad, but, in my ignorance, I could not conceive of treating as a servant so dignified a personage.

As we approach the summit of the Pera Hill, the beggarly shops die out, and some stone houses and a few graceful villas in gardens, belonging to wealthy Greeks, appear; a dismal casino also, owing all to its prospect over the Golden Horn;

and at last, a really decently appointed street, the precursor to the Grande Rue de Pera. (I say this relatively, as in comparison to what we have been traversing some half-hour on the steep hill.)

Among some cypresses to our left, I catch a glimpse of the broad façade of the British Embassy, tree-shrouded in a shady grove, on a broad garden terrace crowning the height—a palace in stone, doubly impressive among these walls of wood, but most incongruous in architecture. Tuscan Gothic, copied from the Palazzo Pitti at Florence! Now this for an Oriental capital strikes one as absurd, and is due to the taste of Sir Henry Elliot.

The former building was burnt down during his embassy. It was a mercy that a single house was left on the hillsides of Pera and Galata. There was a high wind, and it turned full upon the fated Embassy, the flames lapping up everything in tongues of fire, shooting down to the shore of the Golden Horn, only to die out in the hissing water.

On the brow of the hill are the other European legations, placed more or less in a line, commanding the beautiful outlook over the Bosphorus; the Russian, large and plain; the French, much less commodious; the German, a veritable palace, on a magnificent site, overlooking the hills of Asia, and the wooded heights of Scutari clothed with cemeteries. The Dutch, too, have built themselves a stately house.

All the European powers are represented here; besides which the English church, to commemorate the war in the Crimea, stands out conspicuous over the masses of narrow streets following down to the water's edge.

Thus it will be seen that Pera with its 'Grande Rue' is altogether European, although the Turk asserts himself some mile or so outside in another enormous cemetery, the Grand Champ des Morts, treated as a fashionable lounge in fine weather by the Turkish ladies, who loiter and eat sweets among the tombs on their way to the valley of the Sweet Waters of Europe, opening out beyond.

Adjoining the British embassy, and shadowed by its dark groves, is the new Hôtel Royal, at which I land. Barring the near outlook over the Petit Champ des Morts it is a pleasant place, and commands a fine prospect over the Golden Horn and Stamboul, both of which, I remark, look far better at a distance than at hand.

At once I am engulfed among an array of porters and waiters, all Greek, but speaking every other tongue, for your Greek is a sharp dog, learning everything it is to his interest to know.

The kavass, with a dignified bow, takes his leave. His mission is ended. He has conducted me to the hotel, and he stalks off to the Embassy close by. Meaner cares would not become him, nor the offer of any smaller service. This I am

made to feel, as, prompted by my ignorance, I attempt to address a question to him.

Arrived in a rough kind of hall used as a saloon, I find that my name is recognised as a kind of 'Open, Sesame.' I am at once asked as to my relationship with the late ambassador, and I become straightway an object of special interest and attention.

Now I must explain to those who do not know, that the classical caravanserai known as 'Missiri's' (the Hôtel d'Angleterre) is deemed in these modern days dark, noisy, and inconvenient, and that the Hôtel Royal, kept by the same proprietor, planted on the summit of the hill of Pera, with an extended outlook over the Golden Horn and embowered in the thick groves of the British Embassy, is the place to go to.

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The real beauty of Constantinople is in its water. Water everywhere, clear, blue, and shimmering; away to the far south the serene face of the placid Sea of Marmora, the Archipelago leading into it, and beyond the Dardanelles forming the channel to the Grecian seas. To the north the long, low stretch of the Bosphorus, teeming with steamers, turns in a completely different direction, until it ends in the narrow entrance of the Black Sea, and at hand the watery bosom of the Golden Horn cuts into the densest portion of the city, and disputes possession with the land.

This immensity of water is wonderful: coming from one knows not where, disappearing one knows not how, ever kissing the shores as it entwines itself in every view, and lending such a strange and marvellous grace to all it touches.

A watery mystery mingling with every-day life, magical and strange! What scenes does it unfold! What memories does it awaken! Mythic, poetic, actual! Classic Greece hard by. The wild downs of Asia, the Kurdish Steppes, the Russian ice-ranges brought to hand, the whole history of the East lying veiled before one!

Looking on it thus, one seems to grasp all time, the past, present, and future, to be read in these great highways, which for so many ages have borne great fleets of conquerors, and will bring them still, spite of the complication of treaties and of nations.

While others praise the city and laud the low hills of Europe and Asia so closely entwined—I sing a pæan to these unknown seas, which first bore the Argonauts to Colchis, and on whose waters Medea cast her spells; to those white-crested waves and strong currents which wash the greenly wooded shores of Asia. The blue flood which bathes the foundations of old Chrysopolis and Greek Chalcedon and reflects the great shadow of Mount Olympus, beheld the passage across of the fair-limbed maid to meet her god-lover; bore the fleets of Darius and Mahomet to conquest; carried

the great navies of Genoa and Venice, and the Christian heroes Godfrey and Bohemund and Tancred on their passage to Jerusalem and the Crusades; gazed on the ignominious retreat of the treacherous Latins, the return of the Grecian Imperador from distant conquests, and the advent of the innumerable galleys of the Crescent to overrun the land, and carry desolation to Constantinople.

How sparkling they are! How rare! The massed-up waters of many seas meet as in a rendezvous of power.

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From my windows I can see the greater part of Stamboul, which at first seems nothing but an unintelligible confusion, but soon my eye distinguishes on a height the dome of St. Sophia, with its coronet of small windows, rising out of a sea of chaotic walls, a pale pinkish tinge hovering about it—wonderfully confusing with its high parapets up to the dome, and four heavy minarets flanking all.

Seen from afar, the great Aya Sofia, the temple of Divine Wisdom, founded by Constantine the Great, and finished by Justinian, does not impress me. The dome, the first of the kind ever erected, is too depressed for architectural beauty.

And here I note that the dome of a mosque is entirely different from the cupola of a church

supported on a drum, raised high on architraves or columns, which we are accustomed to call by the same name, and that it lies more or less flat upon the roof, producing little impression, and a constant sense of monotony in the low converging lines.

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In all foreign hotels you must know how to bargain. Insist on having good rooms, lower the prices, and be extremely polite. Greeks as servants are willing and courteous, but you must take nothing they say on trust.

As a general rule, disbelieve every word. If proved to be true, take it with caution, and be acute in the matter of money. As the Greeks command the personal attendance of Constantinople, and are the efficient representatives at all places of public entertainment and of service, by land and sea, one must learn to know and to conciliate them.

Each business in Turkey has its special race. The descendants of Pericles and Aristotle are contented, like Martha, to take the lesser part, and on the whole make a good thing of it.

Without being classic (the races are too mixed to retain any trace of sculpturesque beauty), they are good-looking, tall, agile, and often graceful, especially as boatmen.

In the city, the black coat and white tie level all mankind; but on the Bosphorus, in the light

caique, which he manages with a skill all his own, the Greek in his embroidered dress looks splendid.

Except as coachmen (for a Turk loves his horse and understands him), Mussulman servants are considered bad. The Turks themselves eschew them, and are glad to fall back on Christians, or the slaves of Asia Minor.

All this you may study in the Grande Rue of Pera, which opens out in front of the hotel—a long, irregular, flimsy street, with shops of most inferior quality.

The noise of the crowd, from every European nation, is deafening. The aspect vulgar—a second edition on an inferior scale of the bridge of Galata, with the Ottoman left out.

Pera and Galata, the only busy quarters of Constantinople, are of no land and of all lands, each country administering its own laws, exercising its own religion, circulating its own money, distributing its own letters. Here are the various banks, consulates, and embassies, bazaars, churches and chapels, including the dancing dervishes, who display themselves on stated days.

The street sellers, who cry all day their various wares, number 60,000: water-carriers, porters, sedan-bearers, who carry you out to dine in a delightful sedan-chair, like the old ladies at Bath; Albanians, wood-cutters from Asia Minor, Persian donkey-drivers, Montenegrins, Croats and native

Turks, form a polyglot population unparalleled in the world.

If I were to enumerate all the articles sold in the street, or all the languages spoken, I could fill pages which would interest no one.

I have not mentioned the Jew, but he is very prominent here as everywhere, moving in a humble capacity as an itinerant vendor of embroidered stuffs and calicoes, or crouching in his dark den in the bazaar, surrounded by every possible ware. The Jew is not appreciated at Constantinople as in Paris and London, and is servile and subtle as in the middle ages. Both to the Moslems and the Christians he is an offence, and to be tolerated he has to keep his creed well out of sight.

You need scarcely enter a shop, as almost everything is placed outside. From those rich bales of Eastern goods, tempting Bulgarian embroideries on showy silk or satin, Persian carpets woven wholly in silk, delicate silks from Broussa and embroidered scarfs and odds and ends of every hue and texture, vegetables from the sheltered gardens under Mount Olympus of Bithynia, and fruit from the sunny clefts of the Greek islands, down to the meat to be consumed at dinner, everything is to hand under the open arch of heaven.

One feature only redeems the commonplace of the Frankish quarter. That is the stately

outline of the ponderous Tower of Galata, with its heavy machicolated crown, rising superbly out of the mass of hybrid houses.

This and the Palazzo del Podesta, another mediæval monument erected by the Genoese (for they established themselves in this quarter at a very early period, and were the only Christians who escaped the general massacre of Mahomet II. after the capture of Constantinople), are all that remain of Latin Byzantium.

CHAPTER III

NEXT DAY

The Mosque of the Valideh—The East: past and present—Progress does not suit the Turk.

As there is nothing to see in Pera, a considerable part of every day is passed in the wearisome passage of the hill.

Down, down you drive through the same dismal graveyard, and the same parti-coloured crowd of striving beasts, ox-carts, donkeys, loaded hamals, tramcars scraping clear as if by miracle, beggars, and dogs, day after day, as if they never slept, and went on for ever.

The day is hot, the water hazy with a golden light, the sails flap heavily on the masts. The white walls of Stamboul glisten on the hills, and every Christian carries an umbrella.

They say Constantinople has no climate. A north wind blows from the Black Sea, or a south wind from the Sea of Marmora. To-day it is south with a vengeance, straight from the isles of Greece.

Of course my first object is to visit St. Sophia.

From the bridge it is invisible, but the Mosque of Ahmed, second in the grand procession which crowns the heights, with its six huge minarets, is very conspicuous. Suleiman comes next, the fairest of them all, considered by the Turks a wonder of architecture ; the Mosque of Bajazet II., and of Mahomet II., once the Church of the Holy Apostles, following on in rounded solemn lines.

I think I counted six mosques on the crown of the undulating hills on which stands Stamboul, giving a size and local splendour to what otherwise is a mean and formless city.

I seem always to be naming these mosques, but there is nothing else to look at landwards, except the glaring modern tower before the blank front of the Minister's palace in the middle of a bare square, blazing in the sun.

On my road to St. Sophia I stop to look at the Mosque of the Valideh, on the highway just over the Galata bridge, with no special interest beyond the fact of being in a prominent position, and generally the first seen by a stranger.

Valideh Terkhan was the mother and grandmother of Sultans Mohammed IV. and Mustafa II. respectively. The Padishah can have many slaves in his harem, but on the birth of a son the boy is legitimised and the mother becomes Valideh if her son succeeds to the throne.

One wonders why this special Valideh selected such a dirty spot for her mosque, close to the

former place of execution, and in the midst of the fish-market.

The *turbeh* or tomb-house (we call it a chapel) adjoining is worth seeing. Here nine sultans lie under the earth, including the Valideh's son, Mohammed IV., a remarkably weak Commander of the Faithful, besides a number of imperial children and ladies who do not count. Their monuments are simply catafalques of wood, shaped like a bier, raised on supports and covered with the finest Persian and Oriental shawls. Those of the sultans are much higher than the rest (often placed on the ground, as in the case of children), and are marked by a turban of rich stuff at the head, ornamented with sprays of glittering gems, and plumes of heron's feathers.

The whole space being small, the biers are closely packed together side by side, usually enclosed by a railing of ebony inlaid with mother-of-pearl, with much the appearance of a bazaar to display Turkish wares.

The small catafalques are ludicrous (each one being graduated as to size), so that at a glance one can take in the age of the supposed occupants, with the full knowledge that one is gazing at empty wooden boxes, the bodies being disposed of elsewhere.

In this case, however, the Valideh is discovered to be the exception which proves the rule,

for she has an immense vaulted chamber all to herself as foundress, with an extra richly wrought shawl over her bier, and an inlaid railing for her own especial benefit. She was a remarkable woman, and has her name in history (also a rare exception) as a political leader under her sons.

Whether it is better to lie in the open, on a sun-swept hill under the cypresses, with the dogs and the beggars, your monumental stone fallen, to serve perhaps as a table for a picnic—or to be flung into a ditch under your own turbeh, where you are represented by a wooden box and shawls, is a question I leave for others to decide.

Before the mosque there is a cheerful cab-stand, and the tram starts up the hill to the street of Divanyol—altogether the best in Stamboul—with a swing and clatter quite exhilarating.

Spiro, my dragoman, a sad-faced Greek, whom I came to know at the hotel, with a taste for strong liquors, under the influence of which he is stolidly stupid, tells me that in this open space there was an oozy ditch, just by the cell where male criminals were executed, their heads dropping conveniently into it. High barriers guarding the operation from the vulgar eye, only admitted to a sight of the head, afterwards hung up on a nail outside the wall.

At least the tram and the cabs are significant of progress. Much as he may desire to cling to

Asiatic barbarism, the Turk, like Falstaff, is now forced, in a degree, 'to purge and live like a gentleman,' whether he will or no.

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With this ignoble preface I enter Stamboul, an epitome of the East; but of the East shorn of all that is venerable and ancient, beautiful and grand—a beggarly remnant of the loveliest capital in the world, in an unrivalled position between land and sea, recorded by history and sung in verse, transcendental in splendour and riches. The wonder of the mediæval world, with the more than Eastern opulence of palaces, statues, forums, arsenals, circus, barracks, obelisks, and bastions—deemed invincible—arches, churches, and Hippodrome: here the peace or war of the universe hung on the Emperor's nod. The new Rome lined out by the lance of the great Constantine, not to rival but to supersede the old—to which all the civilised earth brought learning, art, riches, and splendour; the imposing streets, so much nobler than those of Rome, the squares solemn with massive edifices and colossal statues, stupendous façades outlined on the sky; the glitter of domes and spires, so characteristic of the East; vistas of marble colonnades; fountains gushing abundantly from bronze or porphyry; great palaces with wide parapets and gilded balconies laden with lavish sculpture; shops where every description of goods was found—arms, jewellery,

embroideries, wine, fruit, and flowers, the heavy scent of perfume and incense mingling in the air from the vast portals of cathedral and palace, the double lines of walls alive with guards and soldiers, and those enormous towers which still remain bristling with flags and emblems. This Byzantium was. But what is it now?

The long lines of hills are there: the sky, the sea, shining pellucid as the waters kiss the shores, the snowy Asiatic mountains lost in clouds, and the bright fields of fertile Bithynia.

But what else?

Not even the tradition of Asiatic life. All is dying out. All matter of fact and modern. Neither Europe nor Asia, but with the worst elements of each!

There is no doubt that, at the point where the Frank meets the Moslem at the Galata bridge, the rattle of incessant traffic in your ears, the sight of land and shore teeming with life; even the once sacred Seraglio Point a line of wooden warehouses, where hammers incessantly raise the echoes, the pier of Tophane black with shipping; Scutari, with its barracks and thousands of houses and villas, the wooded succession of towns and villages which line the Asiatic coast, and that continual going and coming on the sunny waters as of whole nations embarking for pleasure or business—have a certain charm of life in them.

But it is not scenes such as these which fix

the attention of the stranger. Rather is he struck with the grey sad shadows, the vegetation of the North, the hills without variety or elevation, and with a general sense of foreign intrusion in the dead capital—which raises a righteous wrath against the Moslem who has usurped and shattered all.

To me the Turk appears an ugly Asiatic, with a hook nose and close-set eyes. The turban becomes him, but it is discarded by all but the ulemas, dervishes, and beggars.

The Turk of the street has little play of feature like the emotional Greek; a dull fixed stare is occasionally exchanged for a savage glance. The common women are most ungraceful on their high-heeled slippers; their features, disfigured by rouge, clearly discernible through the gauzy veil; those one encounters in the street scarcely veiled at all, and much addicted to showing their legs. A race, to me, cruel with the senseless cruelty of fanatics. Ignorant, stolid, with rare exceptions which do not affect the rule; indifferent and repulsive to everything but their own world.

Had they remained in their native Asia, the Ottoman Turks might have been respected as a conservative race clinging to their own religion, manners, and habits; but as transplanted into Europe, and taking place among civilised nations, one comes absolutely to detest them, as mere

political necessities maintained in a position they fail to fill.

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From the Valideh Mosque up the hill to St. Sophia and the Hippodrome, the road—on which also runs the tram—is the best in the city. Broad and commodious for the heterogeneous traffic which passes, with no gutter in the middle, the sides do not slope precipitously on either side in such fashion that only Turkish horses can keep their feet; nor does every bone in your body ache with shaking; nor are there ascents and descents which make you bound from side to side—all of which inconveniences you must suffer on other roads if you desire to explore Stamboul.

CHAPTER IV

ST. SOPHIA

Original glories of St. Sophia—An angelic architect—The legend of Euphrasia—St. Sophia from the outside—Loose slippers—St. Sophia an emblem of later Christianity—Simplicity replaced by magnificence—The puritan Turk has defaced all—St. Sophia stormed by Mahomet—A scene of horror and desecration—The thanksgiving of Justinian—Desecrated by the Empress Irene—The desecration of wrangling sects—Rifled by the barbarian Latins—Abdul Medjid's Bairam procession.

LESS than a quarter of an hour from the bridge of Galata brings me to the wooded platform on which stands St. Sophia, the glorious shrine erected by Constantine the Great; dedicated to Eternal Wisdom; twice burnt, first in the reign of Arcadius (A.D. 404), then during a tumult of the Blue and Green factions of the Circus under Justinian; once injured by an earthquake and rebuilt, more gorgeous than before, by him who, great Emperor as he was, stood like a common workman in a linen tunic, to encourage the ten thousand workmen and urge them to completion.

Then, like Simeon of old singing his *Nunc dimittis*, on that memorable Christmas Eve (A.D. 548), with the Patriarch Eutychius beside him,

utterly unmindful of the immobility proper to an Eastern basileus, he rushed from the entrance to the altar, shouting with outstretched arms : 'God be thanked, Who hath esteemed me worthy to complete this work!' adding, with clasped hands as in an ecstasy, 'Solomon, I have surpassed thee!'

This was the theatre of the greatest and most solemn anniversaries of the world: coronations, nuptials, processions, baptisms; all through that long line of Byzantine emperors, from Constantine the Great and Theodosius to the last heroic Greek, bearing the same victorious name, Constantine Palæologus. Here he partook of the Eucharist the morning before his death, ending the Byzantine Empire; at the shrine where the Crusaders offered thanksgivings, and Greeks, Bulgarians and Scythians forgot their feuds; of which the angels themselves are said to have given the plan, and, leaving their seat in heaven, to have condescended to indicate the means for its completion.

Here it was that the miraculous standard of the Labarum was preserved, copied from a vision in the sky, seen by Constantine near Rome, with the motto: 'In this sign thou shalt conquer.'

Here Belisarius hung his war trophies, the spoils of the Goth, and Narses offered his victorious sword.

And here the conqueror, Mahomet II., rode in, on his war-horse, iron mace in hand, as the

representative of the Prophet, and took possession of the land.

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Language fails to convey even the faintest idea of its former glories. The shrines of Isis and Osiris were despoiled to do it honour; the temples of the Sun at Baalbec, of Diana at Ephesus, of Pallas at Athens, of Phœbus at Delos, and Cybele at Cyzicus, venerable shrines, stripped of their fairest treasures.

The earth itself was ransacked for hidden stores: white marble from Phrygia, marble veined with rose from Laconia, blue from Lydia, black from Thessaly, granite from Egypt, porphyry from Sardis.

The pavement glistening like sheets of silver; the many-tinted marble pillars shining like a radiant firmament; the walls sheeted with mosaic, executed with all the art that the age afforded. A giant effigy of Christ, the Virgin, and Saints over the high altar, and four mighty archangels, enfolded in purple wings, in the spandrils of the dome, looking down on the sanctuary containing the sacred vessels, studded with priceless gems, and on the jewelled veil dividing it from the nave.

Within St. Sophia, the emperors are, as it were, at home, whole suites of painted halls, reproducing those of the Palatium, being prepared for their reception, with colonnades lined with statues leading from the Palatium. Around and

close at hand were grouped the great monuments of the city, the lines of the foundations traced out, it is said, by Constantine's own sword (his desire was to create a new Rome: Constantinople had also its Seven Hills, and was divided into fourteen Rioni).

Forums surrounded by porticos were crowded with the fairest statues, in the centre a gilt colossal likeness of Constantine supreme among the rest; the Senate-house also in the usual Basilica form, so effective in Roman architecture. Here, too, were the Augusteum, the Daphne for state receptions, Palatium Sacrum, the Curias, baths of Zeuxippus, Milliarium or military milestone; and, above all, the Hippodrome, copied from the Colosseum of Rome, with its majestic range of galleries and crowd of shops and booths, where the mob lingered to eat, drink, and lounge; while behind rose tier upon tier of palaces, churches, brazen domes and glittering pinnacles, meretricious in the too redundant ornamentation of the East—backed by the grey walls of Theodosius, broken by those frequent gates and castellated towers which the Infidels found so hard to conquer.

Below, massive groves of cypress, planes, and pomegranates shrouded the hill side, fountains cooled the air, and vast porticos, parting umbrageous gardens, descended to the water's edge, where the summer palace of the Bucolion afforded

at once a cool retreat and a port by which the emperors could embark within the circuit of their own walls.

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When the old Basilica was burnt down an angel is said to have revealed the plan of the present church to Justinian in a vision which he dutifully followed.

At another time the celestial visitor deigned to touch earth in the singular disguise of a eunuch in white shining robes, appearing not to the Emperor, but 'to a little scrubby boy,' who kept guard over the workmen's tools.

'Summon them here at once,' said the shining apparition, 'that I may charge them to hasten the building!' But the boy was afraid, at which the angel swore 'by the Wisdom of the Eternal Trinity' that he would not depart until the boy had executed his bidding.

The eunuch, however, could not have kept his word, for the boy, being summoned before Justinian (who, as I said, was constantly at hand, overlooking the labourers), could not find him on his return, although he searched for him high and low; at which Justinian, perceiving that he had seen a vision, despatched him laden with presents to the islands of the Cyclades in the Black Sea, in order that the heavenly visitor should ever guard St. Sophia.

Again, a third time, when the basilica was

finished, all but the dome, and even the resources of the imperial treasure failed, the same glittering figure appeared, and taking the bridles of the mules destined to bear the treasure, led them to a subterranean vault, and loaded them with gold, commanding that they should be taken to the Emperor, who, on his knees, acknowledged the heavenly aid.

When a dispute arose between the Emperor and the architects, how the light should fall on the high altar (I presume below the dome, for that is surrounded by a corona or circle of windows), an angel was again ready with a decision, but this time appeared to Justinian, clad like himself in the imperial dalmatica, and shod in the purple sandals of empire.

When the basilica was finished, Justinian gave orders that an inscription in gigantic letters of gold should be affixed round the dome—'Justinian dedicates this Church to the Glory of God.'

This was the day before the public opening.

When he arrived, followed by his court and the patriarch, and took his seat upon the golden throne on one side of the high altar, a brazen eagle beside him and the standard of the Labarum at his back, raising his eyes upwards, perhaps in prayer, with astonishment he read these words: '*Euphrasia* dedicates this Church to the Glory of God.'

'What is the meaning of this mockery?' he asks, pointing upwards, turning to the Patriarch

placed beside the throne. 'Did I not command you to have my name engraven on the dome?'

'Who is Euphrasia? Who knows a woman bearing such a name? If anyone can answer, let him speak.'

Among all that brilliant throng of priests who served the altar, the Ministers and Cæsars, the Chamberlain or Great Domestic, the Protostrator, Sebastos and Protosebastos, down to the lowest of the thousands assembled, the question 'Who is Euphrasia?' ran round the church.

But no one answered.

At last, as the legend goes, while the Emperor sat mute, amazed and confounded at the strange event, a beggarly '*scopatore*, who cleaned the marble floor, stood forth and said: 'Imperial Cæsar, to whom I am unworthy to raise my eyes, I know a woman with such a name, but she is almost bedridden. She lives in a little house near one of the walls of the church.'

'Bring her hither,' cries the Emperor, and straightway pages and chamberlains rush out, and soon return, carrying an aged woman, who trembles in every limb.

'Is your name Euphrasia?' he asks, turning on her his eyes.

'Yes, mighty Emperor, it is.'

'What do you know of that inscription?' pointing aloft to where her name spread itself in huge letters on the vault.

'Nothing, my lord, nothing,' and she is about to faint, until brought to herself by strong perfumes.

'But this is intolerable!' cries Justinian. 'Some devil has been at work. Speak—explain. You see your name. It stands instead of mine. What have you done towards the building of the church?'

'Great Basileus, nothing. My lord mocks his poor servant.'

'Not at all,' replies the Emperor. 'They tell me you live near. Think, reflect. Have you done nothing—spoken nothing—thought nothing to give you this claim?'

'Majesty, there is a little act, but it is so small I am ashamed to trouble my lord with its mention.'

'Speak, I command you!' answers Justinian. 'Fear not, tell me all,' and the patriarch and priests, the Cæsars and ministers of state press round.

Then, at the Emperor's command, brought nearer the throne, she told him how, as she lay on her bed in her little house, close upon the walls, she heard with sorrow the groans and cries of the oxen and the mules which carried the great blocks of marble and the bricks and beams up the steep hill, and her heart was sore within her; and how, when she grew better, the thought struck her: 'Who knows if I cannot do something to ease their pain, the poor dumb beasts, so patient in their woes? At least I will try.' So she took her bed and bore it into the road, and scattered

the straw from it on the steep ascent. It was but a little, but lo! as she worked, the straw seemed to grow and multiply itself and cover the whole road, and from that time the oxen passed pleasantly with their loads, and she heard no more cries.

Then Justinian arose from his throne—the tears were in his eyes—and stretching out his hand, on which glittered the consecrated ring—he said in a gentle voice, 'Bear this woman hence, with all care to the Palatium. See that her life is guarded as preciously as my own.' Raising his eyes towards the inscription again, he spoke, 'Let the name of Euphrasia stand—she is more worthy than I, for of her little she gave all she had.'

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I stand before the great basilica—upon a bare unpaved space, extremely glaring and dusty, just raised above the high road by which I came, with its trams and rush of traffic, and clash of wheels.

A few scanty plane trees, recently planted, give no shade, and a fountain completely covered except the pipes outside gives no freshness.

Of the great church I see nothing, so completely is it hidden by an agglomeration of shapeless roofs, hanging on to the huge structure, like limpets to a rock.

Four big coarse parapets, striped red and white, raised by Murad III., are painfully apparent. Also four clumsy minarets, erected by

the piety of various sultans, are cumbersome and hideous.

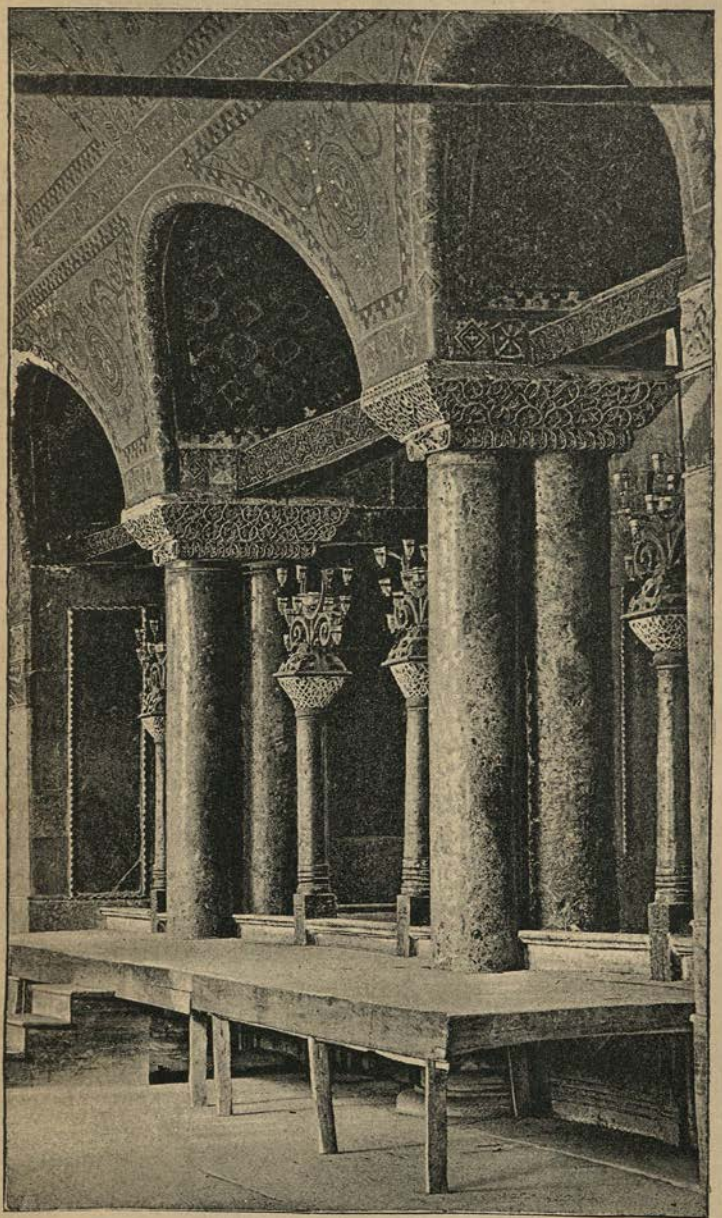
The central dome, with its circlet of twenty-four small lights and four half-domes, a tawdry silver crescent on the apex which cost Sultan Murad 50,000 ducats, to be seen forty miles off at Broussa—is quite invisible from below.

All around are tombs, schools, baths, fountains for ablution, shops for the sale of chaplets—for the Turk has his chaplet, and runs the beads through his fingers like a devout Roman Catholic—refuges and kitchens for the poor (every detail of eastern life going on round the temple of Allah) block up the walls. Those without roofs to cover them sleep in the outer colonnade, as the guests of Allah. The pariah dogs find food and shelter, and the birds roost on the trees, secure from molestation.

Such is St. Sophia from the outside.

Quite bewildered with disappointment, I enter and find myself in a lofty vestibule, the narthex, with gates of bronze (I believe there are sixteen, as the vestibule runs round the edifice), the crosses on them mutilated by the Turks.

Another broad narthex or atrium, much darker, succeeds, lined with marble and mosaic figures, in great part effaced; the consequence of all these outer enclosures being, in my opinion, to lower the general effect on entering the church by a too long-drawn note of expectation.



Portion of the Interior of St Sophia

All this comes to me while my dragoman Spiro is quarrelling with a sulky Turk about my slippers.

None are small enough; they will keep dropping off, which enrages the door-keeper. A lot of slippers, dirty and old, are now pulled out of a hole to fit me. You must wear slippers over your shoes, or else go bare-footed, so *bon gré mal gré* I skate about in a filthy pair twice too big for me, in imminent peril of falling on the matting.

Ragged beggars, travel-stained and repulsive, lie about asleep, and pilgrims (whose clothes at least have received no ablutions) appear in various attitudes of prayer. No one meddles with them; they are the guests of Allah, and safe under his roof.

The Turkish philosophy is to leave everything alone—this is not benevolence, but apathy.

On entering the nave, I find that the squareness of the shape detracts from its size. It did not impress me, and the vast naked matted floor has a terrible look of bareness. There are no aisles, but double ranges of extremely heavy arches support galleries, the pillars of which above and below have been robbed from the various ancient temples I have named. Of these pillars there are one hundred and seven. The effect is ponderous; while, on the other hand, the openness of the church offends by its plainness. Light streams in on all sides from

quantities of small windows, the close-set circlet of twenty-four about the dome, and rows of smaller ones round smaller domes.

No long-drawn lines of mysterious perspective, diminishing in gloomy splendour, draw off the mind into visions of the silent world. No illusion, no poetry; all hard, positive, and open to the sun—especially the arches, singularly wanting in æsthetic beauty, and cut, as it were, in adamant.

I feel I am presumptuous. I know that Fergusson says he doubts if any Christian church in any age excels the interior of St. Sophia; but it did not impress me, and I am bound to tell the truth.

From the building of St. Sophia by Justinian dates a new epoch of Christian art. At first, in the catacombs of Rome (as the type of a persecuted faith), timid and modest, with homely emblems veiled to the outer eye, under the symbols of the fish, the dove, and the lamb.

Then, grown somewhat bolder, Christ appears on the subterranean altars as the Good Shepherd, to comfort, if not to save, his flock, in an age of martyrdom, and Daniel in the den of lions to strengthen their faith. All that is soft and homely was chosen to decorate the hidden Christian shrines, and the tombs of a proscribed sect. The awful scenes of the Passion were avoided, as too trying to those who might soon

have to endure the same sufferings themselves. Nature was rather called in with trees and flowers, and Heaven itself figured as a garden with blossoms and streams.

In the twilight of Christianity believers were iconoclasts. St. Paul at Athens indignantly apostrophised the sculptured gods of Greece in the Acropolis, insensible apparently to their artistic beauty.

And if St. Paul, an educated man, how much more the other disciples, many of whom were of the lowest type and without education.

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When Constantine marked out the Basilica of St. Sophia, he had already proclaimed Christianity as the religion of the world in the Ulpian Basilica at Rome, beside the Forum of Trajan.

Churches and chapels were crowding up everywhere, and the basilica or justice hall was the approved pattern.

At this time came changes in proportion and decoration. Apostolic simplicity disappeared, and an exaggerated magnificence took its place. The Apostles and Prophets were now portrayed, under majestic forms, on the walls of St. Sophia along with angels and archangels of gigantic beauty ; the Prophets, bearing the attributes of their power, all glittering on a gold or blue background, and the Saviour of the world, the Virgin, and even a

vague outline of an Unspeakable Presence appear for the first time as decorations over the altar.

The almond-shaped eyes of the Eastern models, the wide eyebrows, long nose, curly hair, dark skin with elongated forms, long hands and taper fingers now assume the dignity of a style, known from that time as the Byzantine, meretricious and ornamental beyond all others, and instantly to be recognised as in the decadence of art.

Along with painting came mosaic, specially mosaic on a gold ground, so much identified with Byzantine art, with which the walls of St. Sophia are lined.

The Romans had used mosaic for pavements and apses; but at Constantinople it first served for the ornamentation of altars and chapels, to say nothing of halls, triclinia, and vestibules in the imperial palaces.

In the West, we have the famous mosaics of Ravenna of the fifth century, so interesting from an historical point of view; but of the era of Constantine nothing remains.

Such was, *par excellence*, the type of Byzantine art inaugurated by Constantine, developed to its utmost dignity by Justinian in the Aya Sofia and in a great measure perfected by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, the only successor of Justinian, of whom it can be said that he was at once a regenerator of art, a painter, goldsmith, and critic.

Doubtless Justinian may not fully deserve the aureole of glory which attaches to his name as the patron of Eastern art, but at least history will ever hand down his name with honour, as having accumulated all that the æsthetic knowledge of that day commended.

Although by the change of capital Constantinople became naturally the centre of a brilliant civilisation in which orientalism mixed itself up with Grecian influence, it never acquired the purity of classic design. It was essentially imitative, not creative.[1] Richness and splendour were accepted as equal to, if not more excellent than, the severe simplicity of the ancients, a kind of eclecticism carried out in various ways.

With catholic impartiality, the statues of the pagan gods, and even of emperors and empresses, were ranged in the vestibules of St. Sophia beside those of Christ, the Virgin, and the Saints. Nor did the Eastern primates, with the exception of St. Chrysostom, much object to the anomaly. At least the edifices of the period had such a full share of regal splendour as to a certain extent to command applause.

Art, incorrect and overcharged, may still appeal to the imagination by its magnificence, and in this sense the monuments raised by the early Greek emperors were remarkable.

Constantine possessed the very genius for

[1] As always in a period of decadence.

building, which he seems to have bequeathed, not only to his Greek successors Justinian and the Palæologi, but even to the Turks, their conquerors; so much so that oriental superstition has seized on the idea, and it is said, 'A Sultan always lives while he is building!'

From the moment that Mahomet II. conquered Constantinople five centuries ago, through all the varied vicissitudes of the Suleimans, Bajazets, Amuraths, Selims, Mustafas and Osmans down to the present day, St. Sophia is to the Turks what it was to the Christians—the Holy of Holies.

In their religious zeal, they have obliterated all possible vestiges of Christianity by industriously scraping the walls and covering them with white-wash.

To rĕpresent the human form is not permitted to the Mussulman, much less to tolerate images of Christ and of His Mother, and the numerous symbols of the conquered Greek. Still, much has escaped destruction, and one can even now trace innumerable figures, not to speak of the colossal Christ over the high altar, and the forms of the four beautiful archangels, Gabriel, Raphael, Michael, and Israfel, in the spandrils of the dome, which the Turks have tolerated. In many parts, too, the dim outlines of the Madonna, saints, and angels, which charmed and edified a former people, refuse to disappear.

But the enormous bright green discs, painted

with huge Turkish letters, set round the upper gallery, are dreadful. Some of these hideous shields—specimens of native calligraphy, the names of the companions of the Prophet, ten yards long, are fixed on the great arches, happily not high enough to obliterate the outlines of the archangels, clothed with six resplendent purple wings, the only mosaics left entire.

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The church was almost empty when I entered.

At the hour of prayer all strangers are excluded. A figure or two were visible, bowed down on a prayer carpet, and a dervish in a pointed white turban lay prone on the floor—asleep.

And it is here in St. Sophia that I first met those evil glances which the Turk turns on the Christian.

Without a dragoman, it would be unwise for a lady to enter a mosque. The toll paid at the door, which is heavy, is the sole inducement to allow a dog of an infidel to enter at all.

To murder an unbeliever is a holy deed. It is to rid the world of an enemy: their eyes say so. Whatever civilisation has penetrated into Turkey it is not found in the mosque.

Ulemas and mollahs, whom we should call priests, were standing or moving about, and there are certain railed-off spaces, in which they

were solemnly seated cross-legged on the floor—reading aloud the Koran or making those extraordinary gesticulations of prayer—turned to the East, the forehead touching the ground, then suddenly heaving up the body with such a sudden jerk one wonders the back is not broken.

No one appeared to listen to the reading or to join in the prayers.

The mihrab, or sanctuary where the Koran is deposited, is on one side—as every Mussulman must pray turned towards Mecca—which has a curious effect, as the semicircle of the high altar is very prominent in another direction.

The small and extremely grotesque pulpit, or *minber*, for Friday prayers, is reached by a long and narrow stair. The preacher still mounts it bearing a wooden sword, to mark that the foundation of Islam was by conquest.

The two small flags hanging on either side commemorate the victory over Jews and Christians, the Old and New Testament.

A little trellised closet, like an opera box raised on pillars, or rather a *baignoire* at the 'Français,' is the Sultan's pew, within which he reposes, like a god, invisible to mortal eyes.

The upper gallery, reached from the outer narthex, which runs partly round the church, is where the women sit, and strangers on the rare occasions when they are admitted to the prayers in the last days of Bairam.

The vulgar modern glass lustres, rocs' eggs, horses' tails (the Ottoman emblem of conquest or supremacy), and tassels suspended by silken cords from the dome over the centre of the nave are distressingly trivial, and impressed me with a vivid sense of barbarism.

I saw the door by which Mahomet the Conqueror rode in, and the supposed impress of his bloody fingers on the wall. No sooner had he, at the head of his janissaries, viziers, and pashas, stormed into the city through the gate of St. Romanus, over the body of the gallant Constantine, passing down the hill by the Hippodrome, where, when the column of the twisted serpents caught his eye, believing it to be a talisman, he struck off with his battle-axe one of the heads —the mark still to be seen as he left it—than every being, man, woman and child, to whom further flight was impossible, rushed headlong into St. Sophia. In the space of an hour, the whole edifice was crowded—sanctuary, nave, the upper and lower galleries, altar and apse. Monks, priests, nuns, wives and daughters of patricians and senators, together with many of that useless crowd of princes and dignitaries which crowded the imperial court, fully persuaded that a miracle was about to be performed which would bar the doors to the unbelievers. St. Sophia was sacred. An angel with a flaming sword would guard the door, and celestial warriors

strike down the Moslem ere his foot passed the threshold.

A prophecy had said so, and the most stupid and superstitious population in the world was convinced of it. And there were watchers stationed at the many windows on the domed roofs to reassure the trembling multitude within.

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Amid a breathless silence the trumpets sound in the distance, then the heavy tread of the ranks of the janissaries is heard. Nearer and nearer the trumpets blare, nearer and nearer come the footsteps; there is a horrible clamour of drums and fifes and brass cymbals, and the quick word of command passes audibly.

Now is the moment of salvation! The enemy is at hand! The angel will appear! Where is he? By what door will he enter folding his golden wings? Where slay the reckless unbeliever? Already the battle-axes of the Turks strike like thunder on the brazen gates. They yield, they fall. Torn from the mighty hinges amid a blinding whirlwind of dust and smoke, the janissaries, reeking with gore, rush in; white-clothed dervishes, and sheikhs, rattling with coins, and Turcomans and Kurds of the mixed tribes of Asia, mad with the fury of battle, follow.

For an instant the savage horde pause, as they behold the splendour of the temple. For an instant they hesitate before the multitude stricken

with the silence of awe; then, with wild cries, howls, curses, and maledictions, they pour in like a flood. Some fall on the men and women, and bear them out shrieking in their arms. Others tear the jewels from the altar, invade the sacristy, break statues, crucifixes, relics, and cram the gemmed cups and chalices into their garments.

The golden thrones of the Emperor and of the Patriarch, the choir, the silver balustrades disappear, a mass of humanity clustering on them like bees.

The holy icons with the jewelled crowns are cast about like balls, the citizens tied together with golden cords and chains, the illuminated missals torn and scattered on the pavement. An orgy! A Bacchanal! as of satyrs and devils gone mad and raving, broken by the clang of bells, the screams of women, the screech of trumpets, and the roll of drums.

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In a moment all is still; each soldier stands as if struck by enchantment.

Mounted on his war-horse, Mahomet II. appears, his hands and face smeared with blood, the feet of his war-horse dyed with human gore. Silent, awful, terrible, like a visible spirit of evil he passes.

Then a great cry goes up to Heaven, which shakes the vaulted arches, and makes the fair coronet of lights about the domes rattle as with

thunder. 'Allah is God, and Mahomet is his prophet!'

Before the day is out the walls are cleansed and washed, the Koran recited, the muezzin calls to prayer, and St. Sophia ceases to be a Christian church for ever.

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A curious tradition marks the invasion of the sanctuary. At the instant when the great outer gates of the narthex yielded to the blows of the Turks, and the barbarous hordes of Mahomet rushed in, a priest, absorbed in prayer, was saying mass at a distant altar.

Interrupted in his pious reverie by the clatter on the marble floor of the metal shoes of the horses, the curses of the soldiery, and the agonised cries of the victims, he left the altar, and, carefully carrying with him the host, retreated into one of the two internal naves.

A band of soldiers, brandishing their scimitars, saw and pursued him, when, in the very act of striking him down, the solid wall opens and he disappears.

A secret door was searched for—some unknown means of exit. Nothing! The wall, lined with smooth marbles, is impenetrable and intact. No mark remained; the priest had passed by a miracle, and the viaticum is saved!

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Standing under the central chandelier, the

rocs' eggs, the tassels and horsetails of conquest hanging over my head, I look across at the apse of the high altar, raised on many steps. It is void and empty. What an irony of fate!

Here every emperor of the East had knelt, either to be crowned or to be married; to ratify a solemn treaty upon the Eucharist (too often broken), or to receive the Holy Communion on the eve of battle. The long lines of those luxurious Greeks, of whom the greatest, Justinian, comes to offer up his thanksgivings for the completion of his great work of restoration.

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Behold! through a sea of human heads the imperial procession passes. The silver trumpets sound. The floor is strewn with gold dust, and on the walls, pillars, and frieze costly draperies hang garlanded with flowers, the crowd held aloof by cords of purple silk guarded by Dalmatian regiments in glittering armour, the Emperor in their midst.

Beside him walks Theodora, now styled 'the divine.' A low circlet, or nimbus, is on her head, set with large single jewels; her abundant hair, sown with gems, falls back upon her shoulders; long strings of pearls entwine her neck, and a massive jewelled clasp, dazzling to the eyes, holds back the folds of a purple dalmatica bordered in precious stones.

As she enters the basilica, large-eyed and

Grecian-featured, the sceptre in one hand and the globe of empire in the other (for the love of Justinian has made her equal to himself), she looks like some Eastern Circe, arisen to cast spells over the earth. At her back walk her seven ladies, wearing low circlets of pearls and plaited robes clinging to the figure. Then come the Cæsars, Protosebastos, Sebastocrates, magistrates and spatharii, backed by the tall figures of the Varangian Guards, and a cortège of smooth-faced eunuchs in gaudy robes.

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Passing from the pillared colonnade, the Basileus and the Augusta are received by the imposing figure of the Patriarch within the inner narthex, surrounded by his chapter, monks, penitents, and priests, in the splendid vestments which the Church affects in those days of general magnificence.

A solemn greeting unites the two processions passing through the nave, where the Patriarch offers the Emperor a waxen torch and a censorium to incense the altar.

Side by side, under canopies of state, they move, and are placed on either side of the altar—the spiritual and earthly potentates, throned under blazing tabernacles supported by columns sheeted with plates of gold, that jewelled veil between, screening the sanctuary with fringes of gems, of which we hear so much.

Centuries pass, and the image of the great Empress Irene rises at the high altar, a living embodiment of power and of crime, her robes of state upheld by dukes and patricians, who throw handfuls of gold pieces as she passes into her place, as great and almost as formidable in her influence over the Greek Church as the Pope at Rome.

Alone as a new Saviour, the beautiful Greek sits on the throne of the Basileus, the mosaic image of Christ, whom she represents on earth, above her, and with bowed head receives the incense with which the Patriarch himself envelopes her.

It was Irene who after the Council of Nice restored the holy icons, pictures, and symbols, so dear to the Byzantine mind, forbidden by her iconoclastic predecessors. But this fiend in woman's form, ignoring the love which even beasts bear to their offspring, caused her only son Constantine, who shared the throne, to have his eyes put out, that he might be incapable of reigning. And that no possible claimant should stand in her way, the five sons of the former Emperor Copronymus, her brothers-in-law, were also mutilated, one by the loss of sight, the others by the amputation of their tongues.

At her death, after five years of imprisonment, these princes escaped, and stood before this altar when the church was filled with worshippers. 'Behold us!' cried the blind one, who alone could speak. 'Oh, citizens of Byzantine! We are the

miserable sons of your Emperor. In the name of our father we appeal to the mercy of his people.'

Nor did they appeal in vain. Carried in triumph from the church, such ease as their miserable condition could enjoy was given them.

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Here the elder Isaac Angelus, descended from Alexius Comnenus, marked as a victim by the brutal usurper Andronicus, escaped from the Palatium, and when struck down by the imperial mutes who pursued him, appealed to the congregation for help, which was granted.

Again, at this altar, just before the occupa- of the city by the Latins, Isaac Angelus II., blinded and imprisoned for eleven years by his brother, came to be crowned with his young son Alexius; the elder Emperor carried through the city in a litter shrouded by purple curtains; the young Cæsar, his face wreathed with smiles, escorting him aloft, like a young god, in a golden chariot.

Yet so trivial and flighty were the Greeks, that it is recorded, as they enter St. Sophia, instead of being affected by the touching spectacle of the filial piety of the handsome young prince, no one attends to them at all, except to discuss their adventures and appearance. The running fire of inquiry and reply, the gay jest and quick rejoinder mixed with louder outbursts of mirth, go on as freely as in the Forum or the Hippodrome.

Specially in the women's gallery, opposite the high altar, where there is such a display of jewellery, false hair and paint, simpering eyes fixed on the comely youth who wears the crown, such chattering and laughing, as fans flutter and rich dresses rustle—as would have shamed the circle of a theatre.

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Before this altar, now so bare and cold, were fought out those ecclesiastical feuds of Arians, Ebionites, Apollinarians, Monophysites, Nestorians, Eutychians, Manicheans, and general Gnostic dissenters, as to the person as well as the attributes of the Logos. One was Theotokos, another Anthropotokos, in the dignified vocabulary of the Greek. It can never be forgotten, in any consideration of the past, how large a part religion played in the history of Constantinople. Mystics and realists confound themselves in its annals.

The love of the marvellous in story and in faith is peculiar to the East. Most of the Christian ascets, such as Simon Stylites, were eastern; the monks of the Thebaid, and the followers of Apollonius of Tyana, were Egyptian or Asiatic. Even Christianity itself was born under the shadow of the Eastern hills of Galilee.

The Arians, now rather old-fashioned, denied the divinity of Christ, and the very walls of St. Sophia were shaken to their foundations by the wranglings over the rival terms of Homoiousion

and Homoousion, and the right wording of the Trisagion (which the Greeks declare to be the identical hymn sung in Paradise), against the Latins who intercalate the words 'crucified for us.'

And not only were the priests foremost and most violent during the service, but the laity also join in hostile ranks, gesticulating as at the popular cock-fight or at a tussle of wild beasts. Cheers, groans, and hisses ring round the sacred walls; stalwart ruffians of the Blue and Green factions rush down from the Hippodrome above, to jostle, swagger, and scream. The scented *élégants* of the day, in flowing robes of silk and delicately embroidered linen, attended by their slaves and pages, look on and smile. Sober citizens stand aside, amused and edified; and the dark figures of infuriated monks glide about, cursing, encouraging, and exhorting!

As the voices of the choir swell through the aisles the dispute waxes hotter; stones, bricks and fragments of stone are flung about with fatal precision, and, as the chaunting of the Trisagion continues, the extraordinary and indecent spectacle is beheld of wounded men carried out, streaming with blood, and brawny-armed priests with robes rent confronting the Imperial Guard.

No nation in the world ever admitted political and ecclesiastical conflicts into a church as did the Greeks.

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When the barbarian Latins were driven out by Michael Palæologus, of whom it can be said he possessed the courage of a man and the heroism of a sovereign, it was to the altar of St. Sophia he came to receive the crown. But never more could the magnificent basilica attain to its former splendour.

After literally rising like a phœnix from the flames of two separate conflagrations, it was the Christian nations of civilised Europe who irrevocably despoiled it of all that artistic wealth with which a succession of powerful sovereigns had for ages invested it.

But at least the walls remained, the rifled shrines and the mosaics. And though Michael Palæologus received the crown at the hands of the Patriarch before an altar reft of all its beauty and riches, he stood upon the same marble pavement which had resounded to the tread of his predecessors, under the same awful effigy of the Saviour which had looked down on such glorious pageants, the saints and archangels untouched, and that fair circlet of light which flings down in many-tinted radiance the rays of an Eastern sun.

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Now the service of Allah fills the church with Turkish officials in great numbers. Priests, one cannot call them: but there are imaums and mollahs; muezzins to call to prayer from the minarets; Friday preachers, that day being the

Turkish sabbath; readers of the Koran; door-keepers; and a multitude of servants answering to choristers and sub-deacons.

As the Greek emperors visited St. Sophia on all occasions of state, so during the seven holy nights of Islam, at the termination of Ramazan—when the Koran was sent down from heaven—the reigning Padishah came from the garden of the Old Seraglio, escorted by the imaums of all the mosques in Constantinople (the Imperial Guard, and picked regiments in magnificent uniforms covered with gold embroidery, lining the way), the Grand Vizier, great pashas, beys, and ministers, covered with decorations, and a promiscuous crowd of pages, officers, and aides-de-camp.

The Grand Vizier, Capitan Pasha, and Seraskier, led the procession, *en frac* indeed, but with their breasts laden with orders, followed by their secretaries and lacqueys as gorgeous as their masters.

All were mounted on those silky-coated Arabs to be seen only in the East, followed by more pashas and beys, governors of provinces, and aghas (generals), the personal attendants of the Sultan, his dresser, stirrup-holder, the chief pages, and other members of the imperial household. It would be endless to mention the regiments which figured on these occasions of state, dressed in antique fashion, with knots of

peacock's feathers in their helmets, and carrying the richest Asiatic arms, scimitars, and halberds of antique form.

The led horses of the Sultan next appeared, positively glittering with a network of jewels and gold embroidered *housses*, bearing the royal cipher in mazy interlacements in pearls, the very aristocracy of the equine race, and conscious of the distinction as they passed along.

At last came the Sultan himself, mounted on an exquisite horse, proud of its burden, wearing no jewels save an aigrette of diamonds fastening the heron's plume to his fez, the symbol of supreme power, but his horse glittering with rubies, topazes, and emeralds set in pearls.

The eunuchs followed, white and black; these guardians of the harem, of gigantic height, fat, puffy, and disgusting, wearing the fez and ordinary morning dress. The Kislar-Agassi, black as night, yet less disgusting than his white colleague, whose livid features are more plainly seen. With a regiment of guards the sight closes.

This was the pageant in the time of Abdul Medjid (1853). The present Sultan, Abdul Hamid, does not ride at all to St. Sophia at the feast of Bairam, thereby scandalising the prejudices of his subjects, accustomed for centuries to an imperial display.

How I saw him perform his devotions will be told elsewhere.

CHAPTER V

THE HIPPODROME

An epitome of Eastern life—Architectural beauties of the Hippodrome—Arrangement of the auditorium—Spoliation of the Hippodrome—The Column of the Serpents—Arcadius and Eudocia—Chrysostom of the Golden Mouth—A voice from Heaven—Conflagration follows Chrysostom's exile—The license of the arena—The Greens appeal to Justinian—Riots of Greens and Blues—The Hippodrome under the Ottomans—Splendid fêtes of Amurath II.—Demand for the ministers' heads—Mustafa the Idiot proclaimed—Othman in the janissaries' hands—Othman's desperate struggle for life—Origin of the janissaries—Kettles overturned on the Atmeidan—Last acts of the janissaries—The sacred standard unfurled—The massacre of the janissaries—Last massacre in the Hippodrome.

VERY near St. Sophia, and on the summit of the same busy road of the Divan, is the Atmeidan (Horse-fair), the ancient Hippodrome, an oblong area of a most vulgar and unpleasant aspect.

Here horses ready saddled stand in the dust for hire, held by Turkish youths, and a crowd of fiacres with tourists, arabas, and ox-carts are drawn up in waiting, in the shade; sellers of Turkish delight, water-carriers, and beggars, whose contortions are revolting, are here too; altogether a most unclean spot, and bitterly disappointing.

The Forum of Rome, degraded to a cattle market, was long known as the Campo Vaccino, but now every stone and column is carefully laid bare, and the soil lowered to its original level.

Not so the Hippodrome, known only in Stamboul as a horse-fair, and so to remain as long as the Turk holds the land.

All round are mean wooden houses and degraded walls. To the right, on the high ground, rises the ugly white tower near the Seraskierate. On the left stands the Mosque of Ahmed, a kind of architectural chimera, which has devoured not only great part of the ancient Hippodrome, but the entire site of the Palatium Sacrum of Constantine, which bordered it on this side.

At least half of the original circus, 900 feet by 450, must be built over; and the walls of this ugly mosque, with its six heavy minarets and four great domes, do their best to obliterate the rest.

Evidently the Turks have a spite against the Hippodrome, as the work of a nation greater than themselves.

Originally designed by the Emperor Severus, long before Constantine and his project of a new capital, he was obliged to leave it unfinished when the Gauls advanced on Rome; but adorned and beautified by successive emperors, the great Hippodrome became the heart and crown of Byzantium, an epitome of Eastern life, the centre of that busy city—at once exchange, bazaar, park, garden,

esplanade, reading-room and club; the common meeting spot for men of business and pleasure. The elegant circles of colonnaded galleries running round, furnished with marble benches offering rest and shelter (to say nothing of the excitement of the games), and a convenient place for gossip, or for walking up and down. There the last news was heard and discussed; foreigners from Asia, Egypt, or Persia observed and commented on by this most satirical of people; who had obtained office, or who had lost in a lawsuit; what spectacles and processions were to take place, or what edicts had been published; the hour when the Emperor was to appear within the tribune of the *Kathisma*; and who was the last lover of the empress; the news of crops; prices of slaves and eunuchs; births, deaths, and marriages.

The shops near at hand, as at the circuses of Rome and Syracuse, were filled with idlers; specially those of barbers, perfumers, and flower-sellers, where wreaths were sold for victors, burials, or banquets. A place where everyone, rich and poor, realised their common citizenship, and by daily intercourse rubbed down social angles in the friction of common interests and interchange of ideas on the constant battles of the Blues and Greens, or developed independent opinions on politics. In a word, the pulse of Byzantium, beating at fever heat.

At first the Hierarchy was opposed to the circus as savouring too much of Paganism, but in time the universal excitement reached even to the church. The *plebs* and factions taking violent sides in the ecclesiastical riots so common in Constantinople, patriarchs and bishops came to bless the games and sprinkle holy water on the arena.

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The principal entrance faced the Palatium, piercing the massive arcades of the basement built over the ancient cisterns. Within the arcades were the *carceri* for wild beasts and athletes, or whatever was the sport—in which the horses were stabled and chariots kept for the games. A richly-carved cornice topped by a marble balustrade or balcony ran all round the benches, rising in gradations to the top. At one end a semicircular arch called the *sphendone* broke the lines of the otherwise oval shape, as in all circuses. The smaller entrances, or *vomitorie*, on the inner and outer walls, corresponding to broad corridors, richly decorated with elaborate frieze, supported by ponderous pillars and capitals, ending in an elevated parapet, or open gallery, protecting pillared porticoes adorned with effigies of emperors and empresses and the gods of Greece, of which it was said there were more statues carved in stone than inhabitants in the city; the floors spread with gaudy carpets from Smyrna or Persia; the

flags of the different colours of the charioteers of the Green and Blue faction, arms, and imperial emblems attached to the walls; frequent low towers occurring on the outer rim, to which were attached the cords of the *velarium* (a purple awning to mitigate the heat of the sun), the parapet forming a promenade or outlook always crowded by people wishing to breathe the air, or to survey the city and far-stretching prospect of sea and land.

Each line of benches was reached by numerous stairs, corresponding to the various entrances, the broad corridors also giving access by numberless arches and steps to the different parts of the building.

Over the inner entrances opening to the arena, deeply covered with fine sand, and broken in the centre by the *spina*, were numbers, corresponding to the blocks of seats to which they led. Thus all confusion in placing the audience was avoided. Near each entrance also was a spacious hall, adorned with statues, and presenting through lattice-work a view of the interior to which the commoner sort can flock at midnight to take their places, doze, eat, and gossip as a modern crowd assembles before the pit-door of a theatre until the performance begins.

As morning breaks patricians and rich citizens arrive in litters with retinue of slaves and servants; but as the hour to begin draws on, it is

neither this nor that condition, but all Byzantium, which crowds in, wave upon wave, in a strong rolling swell to fill up every place upon the benches. At length, as the entrance of the cohorts, the waving of standards, and the shrill blare of trumpets announce the presence of the Emperor, for a moment a great silence falls upon the banked-up sea of human faces, and every eye among those thousands is raised to the gilded *grille* behind which he appears.

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The royal seat or tribune, the *kathisma*, corresponded to the *palatium* on the other side.

Beside it are ranged the Court, Cæsar, dukes, princes, and ministers of state. On the ground beneath, on a level with the arena and the *carceri*, in an open space, furnished with a balcony, are the officers and guards in steel cuirasses and helmets, much like the Pretorian guard—with a mighty flutter of royal ensigns, standards, and eagles, so that at one glance the person and the power of the Emperor could be beheld.

The Empress, not to be exposed to vulgar eyes, sits also with her ladies behind a golden trellis in the gynæcium.

Opposite is the *sphendone*, strongly supported by ornamented ranges of pillars, the point where the charioteers turn round the meta in the race; while beneath, among the archaic foundations of Severus, are the cisterns (which I have

mentioned), to flood the arena, if needful, and turn it into a lake or *naumachia.*

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In spite of riots and revolutions, fires and earthquakes, the Hippodrome had continued to exist with much of its original splendour, until the sack of the Latin Crusaders in 1204—that cruel wrong done to a confiding city.

Hitherto the Byzantines, in all their revolutions, had respected art. It remained for the French and Venetians to act the part of real barbarians.

Now were melted down, or broken, the bronze and marble statues, the works of Phidias and Praxiteles. The effigies of the favourite charioteers placed on the *spina* to compare with the living men beneath, aloft on their chariots as they wheel round the enclosure; the sphinx, the river-horse, and crocodile from Egypt; the wolf suckling Romulus and Remus (a favourite subject in the New as in the old Rome), all were destroyed.

An eagle holding a magic serpent, attributed to Apollonius of Tyana, designed to preserve the city from reptiles; an ass and his driver from Nicomedia, erected by Augustus to commemorate the battle of Actium; an equestrian statue of Joshua, his hand extended to stay the descending sun; Bellerophon and Pegasus; the horses of Lysippus on the royal tribune, now placed over the porch of St. Mark's in Venice; the bronze statue of Augustus brought from Rome; Helen in all the

splendour of her charms; Paris offering the apple to Venus; the Apollo of Phidias, and many others of the highest interest as historic art, utterly gone. Not so much as a stone left as a memorial.

Still, after this spoliation, the great lines of the vast circus, the *vomitorie*, porticoes, and ranges of marble galleries and benches were maintained; also the broad carved cornice and the pillars, pile upon pile, to the marble barriers at the summit, forming a shelter for the perambulations of the audience, the flower-girls, *hetairæ*, and slaves, until Suleiman the Magnificent (1566), fourth in succession from Mahomet the Conqueror, stripped the marble from the seats and walls in order to ornament the palace of his favourite, the Grand Vizier Ibrahim, the flute-player of Magnesia, and used the vast pillars of the lowest gallery as decoration for a mosque.

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Byzantium, as I have said, never was an artistic centre, even to the extent of Rome; but when Constantine changed the seat of power to the comparatively humble Constantinople, statues, pictures, obelisks and works of art generally were carried there in immense profusion. The city, therefore, when it arose to imperial life in the year 324, already shone with a borrowed lustre, in which indeed philosophy might observe some indication of its premature decay. Nor, as time went on, were these prognostics unverified.

And now as to its present aspect. The circus form of the Hippodrome still remains, though so much lessened and narrowed.

In the centre is the obelisk originally brought from Heliopolis, set up by Theodosius on a pedestal, with inscriptions and representations in rilievo (rude in character, but wonderfully clear and fresh in outline) of himself and his two sons, Arcadius and Honorius.

Near the obelisk are the remains of a pyramid, erected by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, to mark the goal of the chariot races, the sides full of holes into which gilt plates of bronze were fixed.

Close at hand, somewhat out of the circle and nearer St. Sophia, a tall reddish mass of rough disjointed stones, leaning heavily to one side, catches the eye. This is the Burnt Column, brought from Rome by Constantine (a silver statue of Apollo by Phidias on the top injured by lightning, and blown down in the reign of Alexius Comnenus). The column, now reduced to bricks, literally like its name—an eloquent witness of the many conflagrations which have devastated the Hippodrome and St. Sophia, for they stand so near to one another on the rise of the same hill that the flames must communicate from one to the other.

In the middle of the Hippodrome, and close to the central obelisk, still remains the small sunk-down column of the three serpents in bronze,

insignificant to look at, but of extreme historic interest as having borne the golden tripod of the priestess of Apollo at Delphi, inscribed with the names of the Greeks who fought in the battle of Platæa. The bodies of the three serpents are closely interlaced, the twisted tails downwards. The heads are missing; one head, as I have said, knocked off by the battle-axe of Mahomet II. after the siege, when he rode through the Hippodrome on his way to St. Sophia, believing it to be a talisman favourable to the Greeks, and therefore to be destroyed.

I myself saw what looked like another head in the Kiosk of Murad, in the garden of the Seraglio: otherwise this most curious column is perfect and even the inscription still plain.

Tradition says that it was brought from Delphi by Constantine; but, as everything at Constantinople is attributed to him, this may or may not be true. At all events two of the serpents were perfect as late as the year 1675.

With the return of the Palæologi the record of the Grecian Hippodrome is closed, no sound of chariot wheels or tramp of victorious teams was heard after the Latin invasion.

As everything in Byzantium was copied from Rome, the games of the Circus were the principal amusement; the charioteers the idols of the people, belonging to no party nor to any master. Mostly slaves, or sprung from the dregs of the

populace, they began their education as boys, and often amassed large fortunes, like our modern jockeys or the toreadors of Spain.

Whatever political crisis menaced the empire, or whichever emperor reigned, within the Circus they governed public opinion.

Their dresses, particoloured with stripes, recall the fashion of our modern jockeys; the body or tunic barred round with straps of leather, to render their movements more agile, and as a protection in case of falling; a small knife ready in case of need; a closely-fitting helmet of metal to guard the head (a small feather at the side, as the Spaniards wear a flower); a short tunic, long sleeves, and metal coverings to the legs, completing the costume.

The number of chariots was increased to a hundred, and the original colours, white and red, added to by light green and cerulean blue, to which, by degrees, a certain political significance came to be attached.

At Byzantium public questions soon came to be mixed up with the contest of the Greens and Blues. Of the white and red one hears nothing.

The Greens were unorthodox and revolutionary, such as would be called *frondeurs* in modern times; the Blues conservative and loyal.

As the whole population ranged under one colour or the other, and gave free vent to their passions in the Hippodrome, crimes and brutalities

were committed which strike us now as absolutely extravagant in their lawlessness; the death-throes indeed of the great Eastern Empire already falling to decay.

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The time is the reign of Arcadius, the unworthy son of the great Theodosius, who, in imitation of Constantine, again weakened the Roman Empire by dividing it between his two sons, at a moment when concentration alone could have retarded the rapid decline of power.

When Arcadius visited the Hippodrome, a flash of diamonds, rubies, and sapphires announce his presence, seated in a chariot coated with sheets of gold, the wheels turning up blue or red sand. The imperial pictures, banners, and standards, carried in procession behind, display him on his throne, his vanquished enemies in chains at his feet (this often after a disgraceful defeat), the eagles borne on high staves, the cohorts in breastplates and helmets, the mercenary guards, and the legions forming a *corps d'élite*. Neither is the Empress Eudocia, a vain and beautiful woman, adored by her husband, a whit behind him in arrogance, and receives as her due a personal reverence approaching to divine honours.

So Eastern, indeed, is the Court become, that Arcadius is not satisfied with the private attendance of those sexless beings whose original office was to guard and attend the royal ladies.

From the office of combing the abundant tresses of Eudocia's hair, fanning her when she is hot, running beside her *lettiga* when she takes the air, and attending her and Arcadius in the most menial offices, the eunuch Eutropius is suddenly promoted to the incredible rank of a patrician and a consul.

One notable action he did perform which would seem in some sort to justify the Emperor's favour, by 'discovering,' on the death of Nectarius, the famous Egyptian Chrysostom of the Golden Mouth, and raising him to be Archbishop of Constantinople.

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Now, torn as is the city into every kind of sect and religious divergence, the extraordinary eloquence of Chrysostom carries all before it. When he thunders forth from the pulpit of St. Sophia the seats of the Hippodrome are empty, and the charioteers of the rival colours find no one to start them from the goal. None are spared by the great Archbishop; all feel the lash of his invectives. But when he attacks the vices of the Court, and Eudocia herself figures in his well-poised sentences (masterpieces of eloquence) as 'the imperial Jezebel,' the bursts of acclamation are not to be repressed. This is an excess of license not to be endured. The great prelate is rudely seized within his own basilica, and banished!

At the news of his disgrace the whole city rises, and, like an inflowing tide, rushes to the Hippodrome, as the place where it can best express its outraged feelings. Places, like people, have an atmosphere: that of the Hippodrome is freedom.

On this memorable day the chariot races are suspended. Blues and Greens for once are unanimous, and mix freely in the crowd as friends. The marble tiers of benches are packed from end to end, the upper gallery filled to its utmost limits, the obelisk, the Column of the Serpents, and spina, laden with an overflowing humanity; the heads of the Blue and Green factions, with badge on sleeve and jacket, mixing freely among the crowd, sway through the sanded arena, with the pent-up passions of a furious multitude.

'Give us back our Archbishop!' is the cry, thundered from side to side of the vast amphitheatre. 'Our Archbishop, who speaks the truth: let us have him!'

The hottest partisans of Chrysostom plant themselves on the steps of the obelisk, from which vantage-ground they keep up such a continued roar of 'Long live the holy Patriarch! long live the great Archbishop!' that they form a sort of substratum to all the various cries about. Now and then the actors in some private row give a shrill interruption to these vociferations, but generally the public is unanimous in its desire to

magnify the Patriarch, whose popularity is universal.

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Instead of diminishing, the excitement grows hotter. Smooth-faced eunuchs, in gaudy vestments of striped silk, elbow serious citizens in heavy mantles, who value themselves on loyalty and manhood. Women, shrouded in silken scarves or Persian shawls, the precursors of the veil, push in among long-haired ruffians from the Asiatic shores (the scum of some Eastern horde come to earn a livelihood by rapine); stalwart Bulgarians in their embroidered costume make their way forward; broad-chested Thracians, from the plains of Europe, jostling elegantly dressed courtiers; and young dandies, apparelled in furred cloaks of Eastern brocades, attended by slaves carrying sticks and essences—beat a hasty retreat before the violence of a rabble ready for any excess. There, too, are dark-robed monks, eager to carry the earliest news to their monasteries of what is passing, rapidly moving from place to place. Young choristers in white, adoring the Patriarch, add their shrill voices to the din; and creatures without a name from the wharves and slums of Byzantium, crowding in, careless if their filthy rags defile the rest. All cheering, crying, hooting, roaring, as, thrown hither and thither by the press, each one fights hard for standing room.

'Why is he exiled?' is the question repeated

over and over again from all sides, in many tongues and by various voices. 'Down with Eudocia! Anathema! Death to the profligate! A dagger for Arcadius!' And then a vast chorus rises from all sides: 'Long live Chrysostom! Long live our great Archbishop!'

So completely has the mob possessed itself of the Hippodrome, that the imperial guards, sympathising perhaps with the rioters, refuse to enter the great gate, and content themselves with guarding the walls of the Palatium and the Chalké. Of antagonists there are none, or; if any, they are silenced by the crowd.

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While they rage, these furious Byzantines, already old in the arts of sedition under a feeble and tottering throne, the heavens darken with sudden clouds, the sea-winds rise from the Euxine and whistle round the walls, cold blasts come from the Sea of Marmora, and that Archipelago dotted with fair islands where summer reigns, lashing up the long lines of breakers against the shores of Chalcedon.

The crowd of small boats dotted on the Bosphorus below seek a hasty refuge within the Golden Horn, or are capsized ere the rowers can reach the shore, and while low thunder rolls among the Asiatic hills, the earth throbs as with inward throes, then heaves heavily, as though ill-balanced on its axis.

For a moment, fear holds the multitude mute. Then the outburst of ten thousand voices comes with a mighty burst.

'Behold, Heaven is with us. God sends the earthquake for Chrysostom. The Emperor is at hand. Let us force him to recall him!'

A few bold spirits lead the way from the gates of the Hippodrome, and the mob follows to assail the strong palisade of the Palatium, but the imperial guards bar the way. There they cannot enter, but their shouts and cries are so terrific that they penetrate the thickness of the walls. Even into the recesses of the tireing-rooms of Eudocia, who trembles while she listens to the popular sentence borne to her on the wings of the fierce winds sweeping through the open porticoes.

'Death, death to Eudocia!' In a sudden panic she rushes out, and, throwing herself at the feet of Arcadius, implores him to recall Chrysostom.

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Recall, but how? Chrysostom returns, but, furious against the Empress, the choleric Primate again draws the city crowds to St. Sophia, to hear her name reviled.

Violent and imprudent as ever, he flings about his scorn, not only on her, but on Arcadius, the new Archbishop Theophilus, and the entire Court.

Such persistence cannot be endured. Again, on the Vigil of Easter, he is seized within the

precincts of St. Sophia, while in the act of administering baptism, and is borne by the royal guards over the Bosphorus, deep into the plains of Asia.

But not before the city knows it. Again Byzantium turns out as one man to avenge him. 'To the Hippodrome!' is again the cry. 'To the Hippodrome!' answer the echoing shores, and the Byzantines throng into the open Circus until the great space is black with an infuriated mob.

Now, as the early twilight of winter has closed in, the people bear blazing pine torches and lights, which they raise on high as the day falls, flaming from the spina, the encircling walls, the Burnt Column, and every available space down to the platform on which St. Sophia stands, and the great squares of the Augusteum and Forum.

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How it came about, who can say? The idol is gone, why should not the Temple follow? The Temple from which he has been torn, the people's friend. 'Down, down to the depths if he is gone! Let universal ruin follow him. The furies of flame and heat, red smouldering avalanches of fire. Let all burn, burn, burn!'

What hand first lighted the sacrilegious spark in the interior of the noble church, or if any hand at all, and that it fell from the resin of the torches carried from the Hippodrome upon some of the wooden sheds adjacent, for the walls of St. Sophia

were too solid to take fire, no man knows, but higher and higher the conflagration rises, circling in fiery garlands round the brazen domes. The rich hangings of the altar catch fire, the heavy curtains of the portals blaze, the statues placed within the nave by Constantine crack and fall from their pedestals in the ardent heat, the inlaid gems of the high altar, the Saviour himself looking down in effigy upon his worshippers, all burn!

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And now the curtain rises on another scene, three centuries later.

We are within the great Hippodrome, richer and more adorned than before. Justinian is Emperor, who, in spite of his excessive uxoriousness, is a wise and enlightened ruler.

Like the Basilei, his predecessors, and the emperors of old Rome, he takes a lively interest in the games of the Circus, and understands every detail with surprising accuracy. Specially of the Blue or orthodox party, who, it is said for this reason, make his name and authority an excuse for unbridled license. He knows everything, this learned Imperador, useful, poetic, scientific. He has mastered all. Each professor consults him on his own branch of knowledge. Travellers, mathematicians, priests and legislators, even the charioteers and trainers of the Hippodrome, listen to his learned disquisitions on their art.

And Theodora? Does she in those indolent glances, when she visits the Hippodrome, recall the day when she and her sisters stood as supplicants under the marble basement of the Circus, to be jeered and mocked by the Green faction?

Or has the altitude of her dignity laid all these inconvenient memories to rest? One would not say so from that glance of hate which suddenly shoots from her eyes, as the Greens, at a sudden success over the Blues, headed by a popular charioteer, race round and round the arena at a mad pace, saluting the Imperadors as they pass.

Midway in the track of the chariots a shock is caused by the infuriated Blues launching their line of chariots before the Greens have gained the goal.

A shock, a crash of fragments of the gaily-painted chariots cast about, the charioteers dropping their reins to lash their opponents with heavy metal goads, the affrighted horses wildly careering round, others still unyoked, escaping from the attendants among the people, the wild screams of the women, the thousands of spectators at the risk of their lives letting themselves down over the barriers into the arena. Every statue strong enough to bear them laden with spectators. All howling, screaming, cursing and fighting, as in the confusion of a battle-field.

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At the Public Games, unless the Emperor is

directly the object of attack, it is not customary for the guards to interfere, but to allow the license of the populace to expend itself as it may.

Like his soldiers, Justinian sits unmoved. The Court imitate his example. The face of Belisarius, who stands beside him, changes not a muscle, but by an involuntary movement he lays his hand on his dagger, and advances on a level with the royal seat, shielding with his body the Emperor's person.

With eyes full of an evil fire, Theodora has half risen from her seat behind the lattice which she would tear with her fingers if she dared, and, leaning forward, watches the rapid discomfiture of the Greens. One by one their chariots are driven off the course. The metal whips are turned mercilessly on each other, until cries and groans of wounded men, and the loud neighing of the unhappy horses, made to suffer for the ambition of that cruelest of all tyrants—*man*—drowns all other sounds.

'He has it!' roars a Cypriote among the crowd, as he sees a Green charioteer borne down under his horse's feet, where in an instant he is trampled. '*Habet*—he is dead.'

'No,' cries another, as, covered with blood, the charioteer rises to his feet. 'No, by the ashes of Holy Job, he lives. Take this for thy pains, thou canting slave!' and a sounding blow fells the Cypriote to the ground.

'May they all die the death of Judas!' mutters Theodora at this moment, supporting herself on the arm of Antonina, as she points to a group of the Greens, drawn up behind a barrier of broken chariots which they had put together to shield them from the attacks of the Blues, who with streaming ensigns fling themselves against it, as they wildly urge their maddened horses to the attack.

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All this time Justinian had contemplated the scene in silence, save for a slight gesture to forbid the interference of the guards. He might have been a living statue, like one of those many emperors placed around, alike indifferent to the growing danger to himself, or to the thousands of spectators who had descended into the arena.

But now a loud cry rises from the vanquished Greens, a cry so heartrending, so piercing, as man after man of their faction measures his length upon the ground, a cry of 'Justice, great Basileus —Justice! Are we, too, not Greeks and thy subjects? Are we to be massacred before thy eyes?' that the countenance of the Emperor changes.

'In what,' says he, in a stern voice, even at this crisis assuming that grave courtesy of manner which never forsook him, 'is not justice meted to you, turbulent and rebellious men? If, O Byzantines, it is your will to murder each other, am I, your Emperor, to blame?'

'Oh Basileus, sun of the world,' is the despairing answer of the Greens, 'to thee and to the divine Theodora be endless days! But, thrice August One, we are poor, we are opprest. The Blues boast themselves of thy royal favour. Is this just? Not only are we massacred in the Circus before thy eyes, but we dare not even pass safely in the streets of Byzantium.'

'Do you despise your lives?' answers Justinian, stung by these reproaches, in a voice that strikes terror into the crowd.

Theodora rises also, and her hand clutches the golden bars of the tribune, as she fixes on Justinian the blackness of her hollow eyes.

'To the gallows with them!' she cries in a voice too weak to reach him, 'if you are a man. Justinian, spare not one, as you value your throne.' He cannot hear her, but that does not matter, the involuntary words come hissing from her lips. Then, exhausted by the effort, she sinks fainting into her chair, and would have lain there insensible, but for the strong essences which Antonina, knowing her needs, carries to revive her.

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Meanwhile the victorious Blues, outraged at the insolence of the language used by the Greens to the Emperor, fall upon them anew with such savage fury that all that remain are either slain or driven from the Hippodrome at the point of

swords and lances. For days anarchy reigns in the city.

The barbarians or mercenaries break loose, overturn priests and relics in the churches. Women from the roofs pour down stones, and firebrands are freely flung about among the wooden houses, which catch fire.

The flames run along whole streets, specially near the Hippodrome, spreading among the wooden shops and buildings, and catching the scaffoldings and workshops at St. Sophia, so lately terminated by Justinian, and envelop all in flames.

The Baths of Zeuxippus, a museum of beautiful statues, are also burning. Flames and sparks fork up out of the sacred Palatium, specially that portion of it nearest adjoining St. Sophia, soon to blaze forth in a mountain of fire, each delicate detail of marble carving, cornice, and architrave outlined in lurid light. The Forum of Constantine is ablaze; the Chalke covered by a sombre dome of smoke. The heat, the smell of fire are stifling, even penetrating to the imperial apartments, and yells, and horrid execrations, and cries of agony form a hideous chorus, which neither the crash of falling walls nor the efforts of the courtiers can wholly shut out from the ears of the Emperor.

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Then was beheld a strange spectacle. Again

Justinian came in state to the Hippodrome, but this time without Theodora, surrounded by the glittering phalanx of his guards, to apologise to his subjects for the errors of his reign—a thing altogether incredible. Nor would these enraged citizens grant him their pardon, although he swore from his royal seat, the Gospels in his hand, to see *all* their wrongs righted. His words are listened to in ominous silence, and menacing looks cast on him by a threatening mob, controlled with difficulty from invading the royal tribune, and laying sacrilegious hands upon his person.

A precipitate retreat was all that remained.

For five days the revolt continued, and Justinian was lost had he not listened to the counsel of Theodora. Forgetting all her arts and blandishments, her bodily weakness, and that affected languor with which she loved to conceal her cruel nature, this half-dying woman alone rebutted the proposal of instant flight.

'If even with flight came safety,' she cries, extending her thin hands, 'I should disdain to fly. Death is the condition of royalty deprived of honour. If you fly, O Cæsar, you have treasures and you have ships, but tremble lest the desire of life should conduct you sooner to an ignominious death. To the mind of Theodora, the throne is a glorious sepulchre. Within it I am ready to descend, but arrayed in royal robes, and with the Imperial crown still upon my brow.'

Thus spake Theodora, and prevailed, and for years afterwards the Hippodrome was closed.

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And now we come upon the advent of the Ottoman Turks, a nomadic race of military shepherds from the depths of Asia, dating from Zenghis Khan, Othman and Orchan, A.D. 1326–1360, who overran Bithynia and fixed a dynasty at Broussa, across the Sea of Marmora, in dangerous proximity to the Greeks. How the Hippodrome fared under the Ottomans can be judged by the fact that the most enlightened of the Sultans, Suleiman the Magnificent, tore down the marble linings of the galleries to decorate the palace of his Grand Vizier, and carried the pillars away for the glorification of a mosque.

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Mahomet II., after the siege, riding down in triumph to St. Sophia, ordered the silver equestrian statue of Justinian to be cast down, and the heads of the chief officers of Constantine, slain in the assault, to be cast before his horse's hoofs.

At first professing a desire to be merciful, either his passions were lashed into activity by his suspicion of a conspiracy of Lucas Notarus among the Greeks, or that his natural cruelty after a few days overcame his resolution to become the 'father of a vanquished people,' the devastated Hippodrome (as the most convenient spot, open

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and unimpeded, in the centre of the city) soon streamed with the blood of his noblest captives.

Notarus and his two sons were beheaded here, the eye of the conqueror having already selected it as the best adapted spot for the chief barrack of the janissaries, close to his future palace of the Old Seraglio. Their heads were placed in a row before him on his banquet table; and here the same evening, at the request of a favourite slave who hated the Greeks, all the princes and senators, to whom he had guaranteed life and protection, were massacred.

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A break in the chronicle of bloodshed comes with the details of the fêtes given at the marriage of the sister of Suleiman the Great and his favourite vizier, Ibrahim, the flute-player.

Then it is the turn of Amurath III., a gay and licentious despot, with certain *baroque* ideas of taste and splendour, to figure here.

The beautiful Venetian, Safizi, of the house of Buffo, known as the Sultana Khassiki, was the love of his life, spite of the Augean debauchery in which he lived. And vainly did his mother, Nour Banore, combat her influence, amid the conflicting claims of forty favourite kadines and more than a hundred children. It was the son of Safizi in whose honour these fêtes were given, the apogee of the splendour of the Kurdish shepherds of the Asiatic plain, risen in two centuries to be

Sultans of the West. And it is M. de Jermigny, the French Ambassador, who furnishes the details.

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On this occasion the denuded Hippodrome, still four hundred feet long, was divided into wooden kiosks, gilded, and lovely to behold, covered with draperies and flowers for the use of the Sultan, Prince Mahmoud (to become Mahmoud III.), and the Sultanas, erected on the side where now stands the Mosque of Ahmed.

One more important building, partly of stone, in three stories, was for the service of the ambassadors, the agas of the Court, the beylerbeys and viziers.

On the same side the orchestras were placed, which, judging from the present state of Turkish music, must have been trying to the ears.

In front, was a large tent for the preparation of sherbet and sweets generally, of which the Turks are so fond.

In the centre, an enormous circle lined with painted poles, to which hoops with millions of small lamps were suspended, such as we see now in the mosques at the Feast of Bairam.

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On the first day, the Sultan passed in great pomp from the Old Seraglio to the Hippodrome, surrounded by his Court, Prince Mahmoud by his side, in a robe of scarlet satin embroidered in gold, and a turban decorated with heron's plumes,

a ruby of great price at his left ear, and on his right hand an historic emerald set in a ring; the marriage palms, thirty yards in height, waving behind, hung with mimic birds, animals, mirrors, and all sorts of symbolic toys, so unwieldy in size that houses and even walls were pulled down to let them pass; also great effigies of elephants, lions, leopards, giraffes, horses, birds, and falcons, all in sugar, borne on the backs of fifteen horses accoutred with the richest damask cloths. The distribution of these gigantic sweetmeats among the Arabs was varied by wild dances, and climbing of greased poles.

Then came the presentation of the gifts from the various courts, feasts to the janissaries (never to be forgotten) at about sixty tables, the Grand Vizier and agha at the head; the archers, guards, bostandjis (gardeners of the Seraglio, a domestic force about the Sultan's person, replacing the Varangians), softas, muftis, cadis, sheikhs, imaums, all fed; as well as successive processions of all the trades of the city, coming with presents and blessings in Oriental style, each trying to outdo the other. The eating varied by tournays and quadrillie (such as the Moors have left in Spain), with chariots, and men representing the different trades of the city, all dressed in the rarest stuffs and embroideries. White-robed dervishes also, with their conical caps, circling in their dances, with shrill cries of 'Allah! Allah!'

some with red-hot iron in their mouths, others swallowing knives, to amuse the harem—present, but concealed behind gilt lattices. One dervish turning in a barrel full of serpents; a second with a weight upon his chest eight men could not raise, which he shattered in pieces; a third dancing on pointed sabres; with fireworks representing a garden of cypresses, in which one observes the first idea of the pictorial illuminations at Rome.

Then came more banquets to the Capitan Pasha, and Greeks of Pera and Galata in their national costume; the representation of a wedding in magnificent attire, when thirty beys posed themselves as brides and bridegrooms, breaking into the lascivious dances of Alexandria, and the Romaïka, of which the interlacing figures represent the mazes of the labyrinth of Crete.

Finally, on the last day, the circumcision of the Princes, with certain barbarous rites recalling the savage origin of the first Sultans of Broussa; the whole terminating characteristically in a revolt between the janissaries, who had occupied the posts of honour, and the spahis, and a fire (when was this ever wanting?), which rendered the retreat of the harem from the Hippodrome to the Old Seraglio, in closely-curtained litters, very perilous indeed.

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And now we come to the last historic drama enacted within these walls.

The tradition of the family of Zenghis Khan, the founder of the Empire, calls to the throne the brother, and not the son of the dead Padishah—an unhappy reading of hereditary descent, often causing the murder of the brothers of the reigning Sultan, so as to leave the throne unmolested. To spare his brothers is to disinherit his own sons.

Now Mustafa I., brother of Achmet I., the first in the succession, was an unfortunate, stricken by that mysterious curse of imbecility or madness hereditary in the race of Othman.

In a solemn divan Mustafa is deposed, and relegated to the shades of the harem, his cousin, Othman, son of Achmet and of Mahferouz (Star of the Night), chosen in his stead, and favoured not only by his own mother, which is but natural, but also by another powerful Sultana, Kesem (Face of the Moon), both favourite kadines risen to sultanas.

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Nothing can promise better than the new reign, until a superstitious mania possesses the pious Othman to visit the Prophet's tomb at Mecca.

And here we come straight into the Hippodrome, from which the agha of the janissaries and his men are driven out by the party of the fanatics, backed by the chief mufti, ulemas, and sheikhs, who oppose the intended departure of the Sultan, Othman engaging to send officers to meet the

malcontents in the Hippodrome, to consider their grievances.

The fanatics demand the heads of six of his chief ministers who had counselled his journey. (Now the demand of heads came to be considered in Constantinople tantamount to the possession of scalps by the Indian braves.) 'I will not give the heads,' was the reply of Othman when the chief mufti appeared before him, straight from the Hippodrome. 'These men are dirt, and will be heard of no more.'

'But, Padishah,' replied the astonished mufti, 'your illustrious ancestors never refused so reasonable a demand in furtherance of justice or necessity.'

'Be silent,' cried Othman, 'or I shall hold you a rebel yourself, and cut off your head!'

'But, my Sultan,' interposed the Grand Vizier, Hussein Pasha, whose age and services gave him a right to a hearing, 'if the rebels demand my head, should not I be the first to say, "Take it instantly" in the service of my master?'

Othman was touched at his devotion, but still flatly refused to sacrifice his ministers.

In vain the janissaries and the ulemas, or religious party—now reconciled—waited in the Hippodrome. No answer came, and no heads. Where are the messengers? It is clear the Seraglio must be full of troops. The Sultan will attack them! He is surrounded by his bostandjis.

St. Sophia is, as I have said, close to the Hippodrome; the Old Seraglio is as near to St. Sophia. All is as in a nutshell. A ulema creeps down, and, mounting the highest gallery of one of the minarets of St. Sophia, looks over into the first court. The Seraglio is empty! This makes the rebels bold. Certain of no resistance, they break out, pass the first gate, Bab-i-Houmayoun, and swarm up the crenelated walls enclosing the second gate, 'Ortu Kapu,' to make observations. Nothing!

Then a cry goes up in the dangerous silence: 'The heads, oh Sultan! give us the heads—the Kislar Agha's and the Grand Vizier's.'

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Now the second gate of the Seraglio, 'Ortu Kapu,' is passed, and down the long cypress avenue the rebels rush to the third or last gate, 'of Felicity' (Bab-i-Scadet), in face of the harem.

Here, on a marble bench outside the Hall of the Divan, the soldiers find their messenger, the ulema, seated on a stone.

'We have failed,' he says in a low voice; 'enter and see.'

The same silence, the same emptiness. Then a single voice is upraised. No one knows whose it is, or why, or from whence, but in a moment the crowd, hitherto irresolute, adopts the cry.

'Give us Mustafa, our Sultan!' 'Yes, yes,

Mustafa,' echo the soldiers, 'we want Mustafa,' and at once a new stimulus possesses them.

The stillness of death is in these fair white courts, parted by cypress gardens and gaily-painted kiosks.

Then one of the ulemas points with his finger to a high thick wall. 'The harem,' he whispers; 'he is there.'

'Mustafa! Mustafa!' shout the rebels loudly; then, mounting on piles of wood accumulated for the fires, they reach the height of a cupola; the cover flies in a thousand pieces, and a feeble voice answers, 'I am here.'

'My Padishah,' cries the leader of the janissaries, entering and throwing himself at the idiot's feet, 'the army awaits you. Come!'

Mustafa smiles blandly. The noise and the gay uniforms please him, the white turbans of the janissaries catch his eye.

'I am thirsty,' he cries; 'give me drink.'

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Meanwhile Othman, hidden in the depths of that harem, to enter which needed the clue of Ariadne, with his faithful ministers, whom he reserves only to be given up at the last moment to save his own life, finding the fates against him, flings out their palpitating bodies to the mob.

Too late. 'Padishah Mustafa!' is the cry which follows this needless butchery. 'We have found our Sultan Mustafa.'

'No! no!' cry the ulemas, who all along intrigued for Othman. 'Othman, not Mustafa, is your Caliph.' But pikes and axes and lances forcibly impose silence, while muezzins hastily mount the minarets of St. Sophia and the Mosque of Ahmed, and proclaim the idiot Mustafa.

He, passive and unconscious, aloft in a chariot between two slaves, is deposited safely in the Mosque of the Janissaries, within the Hippodrome, to be defended by them in case of need.

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From his hiding-place Othman, his Vizier beside him, calls to the agha of the janissaries (dolorous at the defection of his men), who came with deep salutations, metaphorically casting ashes on his head.

'Listen,' said the son of Mahferouz (Star of the Night). 'I, your Padishah, son of Achmet, will give fifty ducats of gold, a fair piece of crimson cloth for uniform, and ten piastres per day more pay, to every soldier who will assist to depose Mustafa. Speedily make my conditions known, O agha.'

'Thy slave is in his master's hand,' is the answer.

Then, mounting some steps to the Hippodrome, the friendly agha prepares to address the troops, but in vain.

'Down with him!' is the general cry. 'To death with the traitor! hit him on the mouth!

finish him!' A hundred sabres flash out, and in a moment nothing remains of the agha but a shapeless mass, the same infuriated janissaries rushing down the hill to the Old Seraglio, where, in the name of Mustafa, they sack the beauteous courts, shedding the blood of all they please.

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Meanwhile, in the Hippodrome a chance finger pointed in the air reveals the hiding-place of the unhappy Othman under a pile of mats and prayer-carpets, in a white tunic, and wearing a little cap like the eunuchs, and thus pushed, pelted, and beaten by the janissaries, mounted on an old horse caught on its way to the shambles, the 'Shadow of God' appears before his people.

'Dear Othman, noble Padishah,' cry the janissaries, inexorable in their cruelty before the hideous travesty of this pampered youth. 'Young, comely Othman, whose word is the law of the world, will you still run through the streets of Stamboul to watch the breakers of the Prophet's law, filled with the wines of Greece? Or will you rather chain us to the galleys of your fleet, and throw us into the sea, while you journey to Mecca?'

'Accursed wretches!' cries Othman, moved to a cry of pain. 'Remember that it was but yesterday that I was your Sultan, and you lay vilely at my feet.'

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But his voice is stopped by the janissaries, trembling at the effect his words produced, and the fatal bowstring is tightened round his neck. But Othman, who was young and vigorous, struggles with the black mutes.

'Wretches!' he exclaims, seeing that the officers themselves, impatient at the delay, threaten the executioners; 'whence comes your hate to me?'

'He is a serpent,' cries one. 'Listen not. If you spare him, he will kill us all.'

Then the signal is given to tighten the cord, so fine it can scarce be seen, but so strong it ends a man's life in an instant. But again the cries of the crowd arrest their hands.

'Who gave you your place?' asks Othman, turning upon those who pressed on him with the courage of despair.

'The Sultan Mustafa' is the prompt reply.

'The Sultan Mustafa!' answers Othman with a wild laugh, 'he is an idiot. He knows not his own name. Come, open the window, let me speak to my good people. Agha, spahis, janissaries,' he cries to the troops assembled below in the Hippodrome, 'and you, my fathers, who have known me from my cradle, if by ignorance or vanity of youth I have lent my ear to evil counsellors, why humiliate in me the sacred dignity I bear?' Upon which many voices of the people mingled with some of the soldiers answer 'Spare him!

He is our Padishah. Take him back to the Seraglio!'

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But it was not to be. The strong instinct of life in this gallant youth, who had honourably conducted armies to battle, the energy of character he had displayed, the constancy, the courage, the eloquence of the pathetic words he had spoken, standing there half-naked before his insolent soldiers—were all arguments against him.

Three times the fatal bowstring was placed around his neck, and three times withdrawn by the compassion of the people; but the painful scene could not be prolonged.

The new Grand Vizier, Daoud Pasha, saw the triumph of his own ambition in the imbecility of Mustafa and the folly of the Valideh, his mother, also in the possession of the treasure of the murdered Grand Vizier, Hussein (which Othman had deposited with the first agha of the janissaries), and was able, under the pretence of escorting Othman to the *cage* in the Old Seraglio, in which deposed Sultans were confined, in reality to bear him to the Castle of the Seven Towers, where every stone has its tradition of blood.

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The rumour ran round that Othman's life was safe; so the crowd parted, each one to his home.

But no sooner had the gates of the Castle closed upon him, and the outer silence testified to

the solitude around, than, like some vindictive fiend, Daoud appeared, and the bowstring and the sack were ready.

But Othman, whom twenty hours of agony had neither exhausted nor discouraged, sold his young life dear. A desperate fight ensued within his narrow cell.

Then came upon the scene a tall and hideous eunuch, an adept in the vile trade of secret murder. With one cruel blow he wrung from the unhappy boy a scream of anguish, and while faint from pain strangled him.

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The historian Von Hammer, like a thoroughgoing German as he is, spite of the horror of the most revolting details, has instituted a long and minute comparison between the sufferings of the Greek emperor, Andronicus, and Othman II.

Both were tortured in the Hippodrome, that great theatre of public events, which so truly represents the aspect of the times. Andronicus—grandson of Alexius Comnenus, one of the most conspicuous characters of his age—for his crimes merited death. The youth of Othman appealed to universal pity. But even the punishment of a bad sovereign becomes a crime when inflicted with useless barbarity, and the royal criminal himself, condemned without a tribunal, at the mercy of the populace, is justified to posterity.

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Now we come to quite modern times in the revolt of the janissaries, 1839, when the noble monument of the Hippodrome had fallen to the vile uses of a horse-fair, which I visited with so much pain.

The janissaries were originally instituted by the Emir Orchan, at Broussa, in 1326, to become a regular disciplined band of infantry.

The name Yeni Ischeri (new troops) came to be corrupted into janissaries.

Originally the children of conquered Christians forced to become Moslems, with the idea of strengthening the ties between subjects of different faiths, they were taught entire obedience, and to endure fatigue, pain, and hunger. But liberal honours and rewards reconciled them to this hard life, and the easy indulgence of every vice, spite of the solemn benediction of a holy dervish (supposed to convey sanctity), who, drawing the sleeve of his mantle over the head of one in the first rank, declared to Orchan that 'they should be fortunate in fight.' In memory of which prophecy the janissaries always wore as part of their uniform a cap of white felt like a dervish, with a strip of woollen stuff hanging from it, to represent the sleeve of the holy man's mantle.

From the great favour in which they were held by successive Sultans, especially by Mahomet II., the janissaries may be said for centuries to have tyrannised over the empire.

It was they who made and unmade caliphs at their pleasure by a series of military *pronunciamientos* similar to those of Spain. But after the cruel murders of Othman II. and Selim III., also of the unhappy Mustafa, Othman's successor, they gradually came to be regarded with general horror. So audacious had power made them, that no crime or conspiracy took place in the city, harem, or provinces, without their active connivance.

The overturning of their kettles in the Hippodrome (signifying that they would receive neither food nor pay from the Sultan) was at all times the signal of revolt. And the kettles came to be overturned on every occasion.

Within their fortress of the Seven Towers they imprisoned and murdered seven Sultans, as well as numberless other illustrious victims, their fashion being to place the severed heads upon the battlements, that all men might judge of their power.

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All great revolutions turn upon some special crisis, often trivial, round which events range themselves in a course of natural sequence, which would seem specially prepared for their accomplishment, but are in reality only evolutions in the inevitable progression of circumstances.

The immediate cause of the janissaries' fall was their resistance to certain military reforms

initiated by the excellent Sultan, Selim III., and so unloyal was their opposition that they actually betrayed a Turkish force to the Russians, and proved their inefficiency in battle by repeated defeats in the campaign on the Danube in 1810–1811 against the Greeks.

So flagrant was their misconduct, it was plain that a decisive struggle was imminent, and it was not long before some changes in the forts on the Bosphorus gave the signal for revolt.

The janissaries at once overturned their camp-kettles in the Hippodrome, the upper portion of which had become their barrack, as I have said.

The Sultan Selim, badly advised, made concessions, and to appease them sacrificed the lives of his most faithful ministers. In return he was deposed, and the janissaries, in possession of the Seraglio, soon resorted to the fatal bowstring to end his life.

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Never had the janissaries seemed more powerful. No sooner was the unfortunate Selim buried out of sight, and a second victim, in the person of his nephew, violently disposed of, than the janissaries condescended to allow Mahmoud II., the only living heir, to succeed to the throne of his uncle Selim.

With the fate of his two predecessors before his eyes Mahmoud was forced to feign submission

to superior force. At a divan at which he presided an edict was published confirming their authority, and solemnly cursing in the picturesque phraseology of the East all innovation and reform, past, present, and to come. But it was precisely this tyranny which Mahmoud never forgave. Brave, wise, and patient, he understood that the existence of the janissaries was inconsistent with legislation of any kind, a military despotism subversive of all law.

Their utter destruction was therefore resolved upon, and its accomplishment was the event of his reign.

Mehemet Ali had set him the example by the massacre of the Mamelukes at Cairo, and in the mind of the Sultan every janissary was already doomed.

Sure of his Grand Vizier, secretly authorised by the Chief Mufti, the venerated exponent of the Moslem law, encouraged by the ulemas and imaums, Mahmoud, before striking the first blow, ventured to promulgate a 'vetva' of reform, drawn up and signed by the Council, ordering a certain number of each regiment to practise the same modern exercises as the regular troops.

As had been foreseen, mutinies and tumults followed. Again the kettles were overturned in the Atmeidan (Hippodrome), and with loud cries the heads of the Grand Vizier and the ministers were demanded. An attack on the Seraglio was

secretly arranged for the 15th of June, 1826, and the deposition of Mahmoud was to follow.

Silently, in isolated groups, under cover of the darkness, the conspirators pass into the Hippodrome, after sending forth invitations to all the regular troops to join them. But the universal detestation they inspire is too great. Not a soldier came, only the very scum of the city—of which there is at Constantinople such a choice among Armenians, Albanians, Bulgarians, and last, though not least, Greeks—and turbulent bands spread through the city.

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Called upon to declare their intentions, the janissaries with one voice replied: 'We will have none of the new military exercises practised by the Infidels. We demand the heads of all those pashas and generals who have advised otherwise' —such a one, and another, and another, naming all the high officials faithful to Mahmoud.

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An Eastern proverb says, 'Happy are those who sleep in peace, and are saluted by no evil in awakening.'

The following morning brought tidings of grave events.

The Grand Vizier, absent at the palace of Beylerbey, on the Bosphorus, on receipt of the news, flung himself alone, with a servant, into a caïque, and in little more than half an hour arrived

at the foot of the wall which surrounds the gardens of the Seraglio.

Safely landed, he ordered the immediate concentration of the troops at a kiosk near the Gate, called to him Mohammed, Emir of Cyprus, the keeper of the treasure, who, according to custom, slept in the Seraglio, and ordered him at once to carry to the Sultan (also absent on the Bosphorus) the news of what had occurred, and to ask his permission to unfold the Sacred Standard of the Prophet.

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At this call, so sacred to the Mussulman, which only the dying are dispensed from obeying, the people rose, and in less than half an hour the colleges and schools, their professors at their head, the citizens from every quarter, conducted by the imaums of the different districts, the people of Galata, Pera, and Scutari, preceded by their magistrates and effendis, appear running from all sides to the kiosk in the open space before the gate of the Seraglio, where the venerable Church of St. Irene casts a dark shadow on the magnificent plane-tree we still see.

The Sultan meanwhile has arrived, and hastens alone to the most secret part of the harem, where, among domed kiosks and tiny pavilions all painted and glittering in the sun, is the shrine called 'The Chamber of Noble Vestments' (imitated from the 'Purple Chamber' of the Greek emperors), in

which are kept the relics of the Prophet—his stick, arrow, mantle, and, above all, his standard, solemnly uncovered once a year.

Taking from its place 'The majestic cypress of the garden of victory' (meaning the green standard of the Prophet), the Sultan returns, and gives it into the keeping of the Grand Vizier and the Chief Mufti, who reverently hand it to the Moslem officers, who in their turn, amid cries of 'Allah! Allah!' rush out of the gate towards the Mosque of Ahmed, and place the standard within the delicately carved stone pulpit (the counterpart of the one at Mecca).

Then is read aloud by the ulema the decree by which the bands of the janissaries are dissolved, and all men freed from obedience or feudal service to them for ever.

This is followed by a general distribution from the stores of the palace of sabres, cartouches, and guns among such as had no arms. Mahmoud himself, scimitar in hand, mounted on his charger and surrounded by a court of gorgeously apparelled guards, riding up and down the broad alleys of the garden of the Seraglio, took his place with his attendant in a silken pavilion raised over the deeply arched gateway, in the sight of all his subjects, so that he might be at hand to issue orders, and with his own eyes to behold such faithful citizens as obey his call.

While Mahmoud chafes at this inglorious inaction—for he would have gone forth in person to face the rebels but was overruled—Hussein and Mohammed, brother and secretary of the Grand Vizier, losing all patience, place themselves at the head of a regiment of artillery, and gallop up the Street of the Divan to the Atmeidan (Hippodrome), where the janissaries are encamped in front of their barracks; many others, coming from all parts, joining in as they advance into the historic circus, famous in all ages as the rallying-ground of the disaffected and seditious.

'People of Mahomet,' cries a mufti, standing on the steps of the great stone portal of the mosque of Ahmed, bordering on the Hippodrome, 'why do you tarry? Allah and his representative, your Caliph and Sultan, bid you advance.'

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The janissaries, whose outer posts touched upon the Street of the Divan and the walls of the Mosque of Ahmed (all this, the classic part of Constantinople, being, as I have said, closely pressed together), grew pale at the sight of the troops, over whom waved the Sacred Standard.

Defending themselves as well as the nature of the ground permitted, surrounded as it was by detached buildings, but without any external wall, a barricade is formed, under cover of which they lay.

Called on by the command of Hussein and

the other loyal pashas to come forth and submit to the mercy of the Sultan, they reply by shouts and yells of defiance.

What! submit to those shadowy rulers whom they had so often created and exterminated at their will? And to this youth Mahmoud, when but a few months before they had tightened the bowstring about the neck of his predecessor, Selim, within the precincts of the Royal Seraglio?

'*Never!*'

Thoroughly inflexible, brutal, ignorant, and murderous as they were, the blood of heroes flowed in their veins. Not a man among them stirs to accept life on the terms of submission.

Then Hussein, to whose mind these delays were fraught with danger (for courage, however ill applied, ever has charms for the multitude), orders the artillery of Kara Djehennen to open fire, and the loyal columns to advance to the attack.

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Their entrenchments broken down, their barricades overturned, the ground of the Atmeidan laden with corpses, each troop advances to fill up the breaches made by a hand-to-hand conflict, the cannon mowing down the closely-packed masses by hundreds. Yet the devoted janissaries still fought on with a certain order, in face of this fierce attack, or massacre rather—for they are falling like the leaves of autumn before a tempestuous blast.

To the number of seven or eight thousand they managed to retreat to their barracks, and to fortify themselves behind the walls. Here, without a leader, plan, arms, or munitions of any kind, they still sell their lives dearly, each man with his great courage a host in himself.

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But as is usual in this city of conflagrations, as had been before in the old times in the riots of the Hippodrome, and as is now, and ever will be, *fire* came to solve the difficulty, and envelop the attacked and the attackers in its mantle of flame.

Some say a lighted torch in the hand of a bold soldier, Mustafa by name, kindled the spark. Others, that the guns set fire to an outhouse of boards, adjoining the barracks, a place where the butchers kept their cattle before slaughtering them. A torch, a gun—no matter which—and the barracks, lightly built of wood, as are all Turkish houses, burst into jets of fire. Fire from without pouring in from the cannon's mouth, and fire from within consuming the walls to which they had fled for refuge. Fire everywhere; as in the day of universal judgment, mountains of fire and smoke, mounting high from the Atmeidan into the unclouded heaven, to announce their defeat to the various quarters of the city. The shipping, the harbour, the quays down to the shore of the Sea of Marmora filled with an eager multitude, whose lives are on the balance, for

had the janissaries prevailed a general massacre would have deluged Constantinople with blood.

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What help is there for these devoted men? So frightful were their shrieks, that for a moment they are heard afar over the deadly din of shot and shell, but whether as appeals for mercy, or as the wild utterings of despair, never can be known. In that hour four thousand janissaries are said to have perished, and even such miserable fugitives as managed to escape were cut down without mercy. Again the great Hippodrome remained closed for years.

CHAPTER VI

MOSQUE OF AHMED—PALATIUM

Picturesque scene under the plane-trees—Barbarity of Turkish architecture—Sultan Ahmed ascends the throne—On the site of Constantine's palace—Round the Palatium Sacrum—Desolation alone remains—Memories are imperishable—A vision of old palaces—Theophilus with the golden apple—The Palatium Sacrum superseded.

As the mosque of Ahmed was built by three Ahmeds, the six minarets are said to be—one for Ahmed I., two for Ahmed II., and three for Ahmed III.; but this is apocryphal.

At all events, six minarets is a dignity which none of the others share. Even the mosque of Suleiman the Magnificent has but four, the one of Ahmed, therefore, being generally considered an object of great admiration to strangers, but it inspired me, I must confess, with very different feelings. The hard cold lines of the bad modern architecture are absolutely without beauty; the rows of small domes in the cloistered court, and the innumerable roofs which cluster round the central edifice, are utterly unmeaning. But for the trees which rise up like a screen of beauty to

soften the walls, I should have felt tempted to turn away without entering the building.

If you have seen one mosque, you have seen all; the variations are so trifling, the absence of art so complete, and the monotony so excessive.

Here past the solid stone gate-house a large empty space opens out, surrounded by walls of irregular wooden houses of all shapes and sizes, with mysterious doors, in and out of which veiled figures flit with a flash of Eastern life not often encountered in Stamboul.

Whatever tragedies, if any, take place are well concealed. The bowstring and the sack belong to another age in a city where now even the weird shores of the Old Seraglio are bordered with dockyards and half-finished boats.

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It was the Feast of Bairam. The large court, adorned with those majestic plane-trees which I have never seen out of Turkey, was a perfect hotbed of people. Booths for cakes and sweets were raised under the branches, each crowded with customers in many-coloured clothes. Figures in long coats or caftans of some inexpressibly gaudy fabric, swathed with bright scarves, carried about water and 'drinks.' A drum beaten somewhere in the shade, to the accompaniment of a shrill pipe, made a deafening noise; women, slightly veiled with the all-concealing *ferejeh* of intense scarlet, blue, or rose, lounged together at little tables, the

men never approaching or apparently raising their eyes to look at them, but slinking away into small tents to sit and smoke with that silent calm characteristic of the Turk. All this, intended to amuse, is as utterly dull and wearisome as can be imagined.

Not so the children, of whom there were scores running in all directions, principally gathered about the tables covered with those cakes and luscious sweets I think so cloying, or under the swings and see-saws erected near the great flight of steps leading up to the pillared portico of the mosque.

No little boys mixed with these happy little girls—each one arrayed in a new dress, as is imperative at Bairam. Some, made of silk or satin, were very pretty. Of these they took little heed, but screaming with delight, precipitated themselves in and out of the swings in a most reckless fashion.

One little black-eyed child, in a white satin frock full to her heels, spied me out as I left the carriage, and coming up, seized my hand, trying to pull me with her to a swing, upon which she had been balancing up and down.

I shook my head, and gently loosed her clinging fingers. But this was not enough; evidently this infant in white satin was a petted little Turk, accustomed to her own way. Again and again she returned to the charge, determined to drag me with her to the swing. At last, not to vex her, I was forced to beg Spiro to explain that I really could not come, at which

she pouted, and followed me with a look of anger in her dark eyes.

It was a pretty Arcadian scene, this Bairam holiday. The various groups, in their quiet happiness, unbending for a moment from that immobility habitual to the Turk, formed a charming foreground to the huge arcades of the ponderous mosque and many-galleried minarets; the undisturbed birds quietly circling among the boughs, and the blue sky canopying all.

I confess I turned with pain to the contemplation of the mosque, but with a dragoman at my heels, how could I escape?

What is peculiar in this building are the four enormous fluted pillars, which support the rather flat dome (all these domes are flat and alike), forming four towers of an utterly hopeless hideousness.

The extraordinary ignorance of architecture displayed by the Turks shows their barbarian origin. They oscillate between the colossal and the tawdry. The religious style is an accumulation, pure and simple, of stone and brick, emblematic of the settled conviction of a nomadic tribe inhabiting tents, that solidity represents power, and massiveness devotion.

Had they not sacrificed all that remained of the splendid monuments of Grecian Byzantium to their savage taste, I might have contemplated their efforts with the contempt which they deserve;

but as every inch of ground is robbed from some historic site, and all the pillars, rare marbles, shafts, capitals, and columns have been mutilated and dragged from their places, I cannot consider without absolute indignation the outcome of such artistic sacrilege.

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The entrance to the Mosque of Ahmed is by a raised stone portico of some dignity of outline, which but ill prepares one for the vast interior, 235 feet by 210, utterly plain, and without any species of ornament.

The square form, as I observed in the case of St. Sophia, with its abundance of forecourts and outer galleries, is not favourable to fine effects. Here there are the central dome and the small domes, as in the Arab churches of Palermo; but size is not art, and of art in this huge barn there is none.

Sultan Ahmed, who founded it, began his reign in a curious fashion. No one knew that Mohammed III. was dead. The Divan was assembled as usual in the Khané or second court of the Seraglio, when the Grand Chamberlain (the Turkish edition of the Grecian Chief Domestic) entered, bearing a paper folded in a square of rich stuff, which he presented to the Grand Vizier.

'Who gave you this illegible piece of writing?' he demands, turning it in all possible points of view. 'This is not the writing of our Sultan.'

'It was given me by the Kislar-Agassi' (the chief of the Black Eunuchs) is the answer.

At length, with difficulty making out the sense, the Grand Vizier, with much astonishment, reads the words aloud :—

'Learn, O Kacim Pasha, that my father is dead. By the will of the Prophet, I reign. Look well to the peace of the capital. If the least disorder arises, *your head* shall pay for it.'

The Grand Vizier and the Divan, considerably exercised in spirit, call on the Chief Eunuch to give some explanation. All the answer they get is to command their presence in the Hall of the Divan.

Here they behold a boy of fourteen seated on the throne, surrounded by all the officers and aghas of the Court.

Soon after, this promising youth decorated himself at the Mosque of Eyoub with the scimitar of Othman, and shut up his grandmother, the Sultana Safizi, for life. But to his honour be it recorded, he murdered no one, nor did he make away with either brother or nephew.

Like all sultans, he was constantly engaged in war, and this building, the most interesting domestic event of his reign, was destined to become the chief mosque of the Ottoman Empire, the scene of the great ceremonies of the Moslem faith, in distinction to St. Sophia, the Court mosque *par excellence*, attached to the Palace of the Old Seraglio close by.

Now the Seraglio is almost burnt down, and the sultans prefer to live on the banks of the Bosphorus, the present Sultan visiting no city mosques at all, but only the little sanctuary at Yildiz, beside the Summer Palace, which he never leaves.

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The mollahs, or priests, were extremely rude, and quarrelled with Spiro, shutting the door in my face, so I saw none of the treasures, nor the pulpit, surmounted by a crown and a crescent, from which was read the decree which ended the tyranny of the janissaries.

There is a spacious inner court or cloister with arcaded pillars and a water kiosk in the midst, covered by a tasteless tented covering, as is the manner of the Turks. Here the water is never seen, and only issues from leaden pipes into troughs for the purpose of ablution—so different from the abundant dash of the many fountains of Italy.

I must not omit to mention the *turbeh* in the shrubbery attached, though I did not see it.

Under a dome, in a chapel lined with Persian tiles, rest—the founder, Ahmed I., who made peace with Austria; Osman or Othman II., his son, that most unhappy prince, who, as I have said, died a thousand deaths of torture and suspense before he was assassinated in the solitude of the castle of the Seven Towers; and the Sultana Mahpeikie,

mother of Ibrahim, a noticeable woman, and one of the few who has left her mark.

To me these side views of history appear most interesting. Like the perspective of a fine picture, they open out such vistas of characters and nationalities.

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All the time I passed within the inclosure of the Mosque of Ahmed, my mind was running on the guilty occupation of the ground. Not only has the circuit of the Hippodrome been materially reduced in order to make room for this overgrown parasite, but the actual site of the Palatium Sacrum of Constantine has been built over and obliterated.

The Mosque of Ahmed stands upon the brow of the last of that range of hills on which Byzantium is built, descending to the Seven Towers and the shore—precisely the site of the Palace built by Constantine and enlarged by Justinian—a congeries of different edifices, added at various times, like the Kremlin at Moscow, and the Old Seraglio before the fire.

Beside the palace proper, the living-place of the imperial family, with courts, porticoes, galleries, colonnades, halls, triclinia, barracks for the Varangian guards, churches, chapels and oratories, to suit the various tastes of a schismatic age, was the palace of Placidia, daughter of Theodosius and Galla, given in marriage as the

prize of victory to the handsome young Adolphus, King of the Goths, in the spring of her young life.

To the south was another palace, called the Daphne, used for State receptions, and lower down upon the shore were the Neaguaura, built by Justinian close to St. Sophia, in which the Latin emperor Baldwin lived, and of which some remains still cling about the railway; also the Bucoleon, a castle or palace by the sea, where the emperors could embark without the risk of crossing a city, so often in revolt.

Further on, towards the Propontis, opposite Scutari, was another sea-palace, the Porphyrios, for the accommodation of the empresses before their confinement, from whence came the nickname of Porphyrogenitus given to those Cæsars born here; all surrounded by umbrageous groves, waving over sequestered porticoes, pillared façades, and vast gardens laid out with the skill of those early times, leading to secluded nymphæa and grottoes alive with statues, where the breezy freshness of the many converging waters below came blended with the sweet country scents from the grassy plains above.

Close at hand, touching indeed the protecting walls (for where could a Basileus live but enclosed and guarded from his people?), stood the Castle of the Chalké, a palace of defence, and the Kathisma, a gallery or tribune overlooking the Hippodrome, from which the Emperor viewed

the games of the circus, untroubled by the vulgar gaze, without leaving the cincture of the palace walls; and another tribune, the Gynæcium, in the Church of the Holy Stephen, where the Augusta sat apart with her ladies.

Around rose the great monuments of the city. The vast oblong of the Hippodrome, with its four rows of pavilions and galleries, the largest of the many open spaces; the Basilica of St. Sophia, then as now conspicuous on the summit of the hill; the Augusteum, a wide architectural square near St. Sophia (one side forming the Castle of Chalké), surrounded by pillars and colonnades, where the famous statue of Venus was placed beside those of Theodora and Eudocia, emulous of competition with the Goddess of Love; the Milliarium in the centre, an arch with pillared wings, from which the military miles were reckoned; the superb baths of Zeuxippus, and the colossal bronze statue of Justinian, so often mentioned in Byzantine history, under which the severed head of Constantine Palæologus was exposed by Mahomet after the siege, the statue itself afterwards melted into cannon; and the Forum of Constantine, which was connected with the Basilica of St. Sophia for the convenience of the processions of the Emperor and his Court into the Basilica, as the Kathisma provided the same convenience at the Hippodrome.

To the north of the Forum was the Arto-

poleion, now part of the Great Bazaar; to the west the Forums of Theodosius (Forum Tauri), with his statue, and of Arcadius; the Golden Gate on the Via Triumphalis, by which the victorious emperors passed to receive the applause of the citizens, the pavement strewed with laurel and roses, myrtle and rosemary, and bordered by red draperies—not to be confounded with the Golden Gate (*Porta Aurea*) on the shore, through which the victorious emperors entered in triumph —and the ancient church of the St. John Studios, now the Mosque Emir Akhor Jamisi, and the church of the Holy Maria Chalko-pratiarre.

Grecian Constantinople was a rich and spacious city, although, as at Rome, the actual space covered by the forums, palaces and monuments would appear small and restricted to modern ideas.

In the narrower thoroughfares (as confined and tortuous as are those of modern Stamboul) were open shops with every kind of commodity, gold and silver work, armour, cloths, provisions, embroideries, and those exquisite vegetables and fruits for which the Bosphorus is yet famous; all, in fact, that a luxurious nation could require. A glimpse to be had here and there of splendid shrines within a church; of archways spanning the road, as do those of Constantine and Drusus at Rome; of vestibules seen through delicate ironwork; and of delicious terraces under

overhanging balconies. Dangerous alleys and walled courts, with incongruous windows, haunted by assassins, surrounded grand architectural monuments, rising from the midst of trees and gardens, and lengthy arcades and statues, down to the glancing waters under the sea-walls—every block and line of masonry repeated on the glassy flood. Then, as now, a scene of busy life at the many watergates (now piers); the wharves and building-sheds of the Arsenal resounding to the sound of the hammer, with skeletons of boats and bristling masts, and behind that glorious confusion of the city rising tier upon tier, up to the land-walls darkly marked against the sky.

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And now, what is left? Nothing! The greatest capital of the world, the seat of the Eastern Empire, engulfed by shapeless wooden houses and scrubby gardens, concealing great lines of half-buried arches, and enormous blocks of masonry sunk in the earth, embedded capitals of exquisite chiselling, yawning vaults and tottering pillars, of which the workmanship reveals the importance. Even the clear water, lapping the shore, reveals among black rocks fragments of frieze, and of columns of white and pink marble.

Alas, the desolation! And besides the broken arches and crude masses of masonry, rent as by an earthquake, lay two solitary lions, the melancholy

survivors of the supports of some lordly balcony, once pressed by the feet of generations of emperors and empresses; the great Theodosius, perhaps, mournfully pacing up and down, as he thinks of the crime committed at Thessalonica; or his son Arcadius, virile in comparison to his brother at Ravenna, who shares the Western Empire.

The fair Serena, under the shadow of silken velaria, taking secret counsel with Stilicho how to rule the world. Young Placidia, surrounded by professors, bound to make her wise; or Irene, in her dark and dangerous moods, followed by subservient prelates, who justify her crimes. How eloquent are those stone lions, speaking a silent language of the past, sole remnants of that splendour which centred round the throne! If sculpture can draw a sympathetic tear, surely these lonely animals deserve it!

And even *they* are not in their place, but are torn from their pristine seat and lodged in the museum-church of St. Irene!

Columns of a later date, of carved porphyry and chiselled marble, were also embedded in the soil, but they have fallen before the navvies of the Oriental Railway, which passes over the ground exactly where the turreted battlements of the Bucolion and the Porphyrios palaces touched the shore, at the fortress of the Seven Towers.

Unhappy city! spared by the stolid ignorance

of the Turk to be sacrificed to the greater and more criminal avarice of the Christian.

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The two principal palaces were the Palatium Sacrum, on the last hill looking towards the Sea of Marmora, and the Blachernæ, on the elevated land at the extremity of the Golden Horn.

During the first centuries after Constantine, the seat of the emperors was the Palatium, comprising not only the site of the Mosque of Ahmed, but the entire cape of land and shore occupied by the Old Seraglio.

The Empress Theodora had a palace of her own on the Asiatic shore beyond Chalcedon, in which she died.

What is now called the Palace of Belisarius, Takur Serai, towered, walled, and fortified, owing to its situation at the entrance of the harbour, exposed to attack by land and sea, was also a royal abode, lent by Justinian to his great general, but apparently little used.

But sad as is the havoc, the Palatium cannot be annihilated by pick or axe. Neither Turks nor Latins, both spoilers as they were, can obliterate the memories of the palace founded by Constantine the Great, which his lavish expenditure caused to become so grand. The very site is haunted by the dignity of his lofty presence and by that majestic countenance which time has brought down to us in coins and medals.

Imperator Major, as he is styled, clad in a priestly stole, a nimbus round his head, a broad-faced man, with wide level-placed eyes, scarcely comely, indeed, to look at, and his imperial mantle cut short, before the fashion of royal trains.

Even the false hair he wore is known to us; the gems and pearls with which he decked his robes, curiously embroidered in silken flowers; his collars and bracelets; the peculiar shape of his round diadem, which gave the pattern to his successors, and the Asiatic pomp in which he lived.

Within the walls of the Palatium, Constantine's body lay in state, brought from Nicomedia, where he died, adorned with crown and sceptre, resting on a gold-incrusted bed, in one of the sumptuous halls he had created.

Hither came day after day the officers of his Court to take his orders, the generals of the army, and the eunuchs of the household approaching on bended knees, as to a living sovereign, a mortuary farce more Buddhist than Christian.

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We know something of how they looked, these ranges of many palaces, casting large shadows on the southern hills, and swept by the warm breeze of the Propontis, from the fragment left of the Palace of Theodoric at Ravenna; and the light triple arcade, Venetian in character, with a central apse, seen there in the mosaics of the Church

of St. Apollinare (all open to the light and air, much as the Turks build now); also in the later Byzantine architecture of the Takur Serai, with its range of lofty windows and massive pillars, with heavy perforated capitals.

Within, a cool subdued light is shed around from lamps of scented oil, of sardonyx and silver set with gems. The vaulted ceiling shines with an invisible illumination, falling on frescoes and mosaics, strangely mixed in subjects, ranging from goddesses and saints to Jupiter and Saint Jerome. There are sheaves of armour, delicate inlaid blades and daggers; statues everywhere and of all kinds—gods and goddesses, poets and patriarchs, even the Virgin Mother, bearing in her arms her son; jewelled stuffs cast on soft divans, gold tables, exquisitely carved, under steel mirrors, set with pearls and rubies; Persian carpets, into which the feet sink as into beds of glowing flowers; carved ivories, and models of palaces, and arches hidden by lyres and lutes.

Without, the gilded roofs of these great halls (which, touched with the sun's rays, shine like fire) are colonnaded like a basilica by solid marble pillars (Byzantine architecture was always strangely massive), and great fountains sparkle in gold-rimmed basins. Around gather the gorgeously apparelled Court, placed according to those immovable degrees of rank, ever more and more exclusive as the empire dissolves into greater

weakness; and among them are ranged two rows of lovely maidens, all in white. Statuelike in grace they stand, yet warm and lifelike, with pale olive skin and long largely-opened eyes, so brilliant under the jewelled headgear. Their sandalled feet rest on rare silken carpets of Bagdad or Damascus as brilliant as a parterre; but who cares for the flowers of the tissue when such living blossoms are there, resplendent in youth and beauty, the daughters, nieces and cousins of the greatest nobles in New Rome, assembled to meet the eye of the young Emperor Theophilus.

It is an old tradition that he should thus choose his consort.

Anon the golden doors of the triclinium are flung open, the heavy curtains drawn aside, and, preceded by a bevy of young pages and white-robed eunuchs, the young Emperor appears.

His imperial robes sit well upon his broad shoulders, his movements are full of grace, as, stepping in the gold-embroidered shoes of empire, with the emblematic cross on cloth of gold and silk, the sacred banner waving over his head, he passes with a certain timid dignity down the lines of the young beauties.

In his hand is a golden apple. Now why or how the fable of the renegade Paris and Helen of Troy should be re-enacted by a Byzantine basileus, I cannot say. I only aver the fact as historical, and I declare that every one of those

twelve pairs of eyes (for the maidens were six and six in line) is fixed on that apple. No one draws a breath. It is so still that the surge of the waves is heard beating on the golden strand; an army of parrots chatter outside in gilded cages, and the soft sad note of captive nightingales floats from afar.

As Theophilus slowly passes, scanning each fair one carefully, he pauses beside the queenly form of the charming Icasia. Emperor as he is, however, he is shy, and stands silent while she fixes upon him a pair of brilliant eyes.

Shy, indeed, Theophilus must have been before such a cannonade, for when he speaks he finds nothing better to say than that 'women have been the cause of much evil.'

'Yes, Most Exalted One,' comes the quick reply, a sudden redness mantling Icasia's cheek, 'yes, but of much good also.'

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Whether the quick response alarmed the young Emperor, and he feared a lady with so pert a tongue might become a formidable Augusta, or whether this ready repartee to a dull remark made him ashamed of himself, who can say? Certain it is he turned aside, and Icasia fell back in disgust.

Now his eye, wandering on among these flowery banks of beauty, fixes itself on another, a pale and timid girl, who, seeing the discomfiture of Icasia, had shrunk back a little behind a pillar.

As the Emperor pauses before her, she found not a word to reply to his greeting, not formal, nor pedantic this time, but as of a monarch love-struck, and taken at the leap.

'Theodora, can you love me?'

Before she can raise her eyes to reply, a mist confusing all her being, the golden apple is placed within her hand.

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So many word-pictures! One knows not where to choose in the lives of successive Basileis, ever more and more effeminate as time goes on, and more and more jealous of the semblance of power they do not possess!

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In later ages, under the Comneni, Angeli, and Palæologi, the Blachernæ was occupied more frequently than any of the other palaces. It was Manuel Comnenus who entirely forsook the magnificent confusion of the older Palatium, and established the Court permanently in the more modern building. Originally it was a summer abode without the walls, on the high land overlooking the plains of Thrace, at the very opposite extremity of the city; a position curiously undefended, but tempting by the fine air and grand panorama it commanded of the harbour, the Bosphorus, and the Asiatic hills, two continents in fact—and far removed from the noise and strife of the city.

Though it never equalled in magnificence the Palatium with that halo of sovereignty about it, set in the midst of the great monuments of the city—like Constantine's palace, it also consisted of a mass of various habitations, public and private, churches, oratories, courts, barracks, and terraces, as constituted almost the dimensions of a town, the whole gathered close on the walls of a sanctuary containing the miraculous robe of the Virgin, warranted to protect the city from all harm.

CHAPTER VII

CHURCH AND PALACE, BLACHERNÆ

The Court retreats to the Sweet Waters—A charming surprise—Panagia Blachernitissa—The Celestial Mother deserts her sanctuary.

So stamped out is the city of Constantine in Stamboul, one must thankfully accept a stone or a wall as indications of whole centuries of history.

The quarter of the Blachernæ, well to the north, where the estuary of the Golden Horn rounds into green and wooded hills, and the pleasant valley of the Sweet Waters of Europe opens out, is brimful of interest.

Nothing in Constantinople so vividly brings back the past as this far-off corner, much neglected as a rule by the dragomans, who do not possess sufficient knowledge to do full justice to the subject. And this place, where the great land-walls begin, answers precisely to the quarter in which was situated the modern palace, the latter-day residence of the Basileus, together with the church adjoining, where the miraculous robe of the Virgin was preserved.

The sudden change of fashion in the abode of

the Court from one end of Byzantium to the other (for not only was the palace changed, but the church also followed the mode, and St. Sophia was no longer so much in favour), is to some extent accounted for by the fact of the unpleasant vicinity of both Constantine's palace, and St. Sophia, to the uproarious quarter of the Hippodrome.

In the Hippodrome all the revolutions in Byzantium, ready to break out on the slightest provocation, began and raged. Arcadius and Eudocia had trembled in the Palatium, and Justinian had deemed the empire lost, when the fierce factions had fired St. Sophia close at hand.

There were no bounds to these excesses. Might not, therefore, the existence of this dangerous neighbourhood point to the reason why the later emperors (ever more and more pusillanimous) endeavoured to free themselves from these popular attacks by transferring their court and church to a remote spot far from the city strife?

This, I think, gives the keynote of so remarkable a change, from the heart of old Byzantium to a line of hills absolutely in the country, and several miles distant.

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The first mention of this quarter occurs at the time of an invasion of the Avars, when the original walls were comparatively so weak as to cause great alarm.

Some imperial building probably occupied the site at that time and was exposed to attack, as a new range of walls was subsequently added.

But it was in the time of the Emperor Theophilus that the new palace was constructed on the model of one at Bagdad, on the banks of the Tigris.

Five churches were also added, one of which, named the Panagia, was entered from the great court by a range of semicircular porticoes (such as we see at St. Peter's), inclosing a *stigma*, on pillars of Phrygian marble, and fountains, the basins edged with silver, which in the summer contained, instead of water, choice fruits piled up in luscious abundance to please the eye.

This hemicycle with its adornments was at once the grand entrance to the churches and to the palace, for it is noted that the hall of justice, as well as the arsenal and other offices, opened from it.

A lofty dome of brazen gilt is specially mentioned, supported by massive pillars, and adorned with paintings of African and Italian victories, surmounting pavements in mosaic patterns, and walls encrusted with coloured marbles and green porphyry.

In this new quarter, all that refers to the later Greek empire is definite and clear, and it is curious that here, too, on the spot said to have been revealed to Mahomet II. in a dream when

he conquered the city, the Turk, following the Greek tradition of the Panagia, has placed his most sacred sanctuary, the mosque or burying-place of Eyoub (Job) (not the Jewish Job, but the standard-bearer of the Prophet). Within this mosque the reigning sultans are installed by girding on 'the sacred sword of Othman.' No Christian, upon pain of death, can enter this rather elegant building of white marble, and, what is more, no Christian is even allowed to live in the neighbourhood.

What remains of the Blachernæ may be approached by the road from Pera, passing round the Golden Horn, a long *détour*, or by the walls, starting from the Seven Towers to Eyoub, still longer; but, as the roads are everywhere atrocious, both these routes involve a terrible amount of shaking. It is far better to land from a caïque or a steamer at the nearest pier, and climb the hill, as I did under Spiro's guidance, passing a little Turkish guard-house and a great mill-stream, the ceaseless clatter of wheels and engines being a modern desecration of this historic spot, in keeping with the ignorant contempt of everything ancient.

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Through a door in a filthy little court, I come on one of those surprises so frequent in the East—a charming garden full of sweet scents, green and wooded, with big planes and cypresses, where in the shade stands a little chapel, a

spring flowing from a crypt of obvious antiquity, above which there is an abominable modern fresco. About lie scattered fragments of ancient walls, held together by ivy. Ugly wooden houses crowd in at the back, with dark sepia-coloured roofs, doing their best to shut out the grand outline of the Tower of Isaac Angelus, behind, and the many towers and turrets of the great land-walls to which it is attached.

On the site of this garden was the sanctuary of the Virgin, where the Panagia Blachernitissa was adored by the most superstitious people in the world; a sort of imperial chapel attached to the palace, whither came emperors and empresses, and their luxurious courtiers, to follow the grand ceremonies of the Greek ritual, and to bathe within the crypt defaced by its vulgar fresco.

Almost all of the long line of later rulers up to Constantine Dragases (who perished on the walls), clad in the prescribed golden shirt, have bathed in that spring. Here, too, was definitely kept the miraculous garment, Himation, for many ages deemed indestructible and weapon-proof, which was brought from Jerusalem in the fifth century, and with which the Virgin condescended to protect her good city of Byzantium.

With her hands raised on high, she stood upon the altar imploring her Divine Son for the city of her choice, and so she appears upon coins struck in her honour, 'Panagia Blachernitissa,'

the walls and towers of Byzantium at her back, invulnerable—for ever! But alas! the rude awakening!

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The miraculous garment was placed in a special *cella* of gold, set with precious stones, which the Basileus alone dared enter: almost every Emperor contributing some offering to the shrine.

Three times in the year, attired in the *lentium* or golden shirt, and attended by the Logothetics, the Protosecretes, and the Drougaiones (chief watchmen), the successors of Constantine bathed with all manner of ceremonies and prayers.

How many state functions had the celestial Mother witnessed! What coronations, what pæans of victory, what announcements of lucky days, what long lines of emperors and empresses, clothed in the imperial dalmatica, passing before the altar in royal state; all the history of Eastern Byzantium spread out, as it were, on the pages of a book, and of miracles a score!

When the Mother of God appeared bodily to protect her people, she assumed the form of a woman, richly dressed, passing and repassing on the ramparts.

Thus the Avars beheld her when encamped so dangerously near the walls, and, overcome by mysterious fears, retreated.

But in the first invasion of the Roshomicidæ

(Russians) coming from the Black Sea, it was her sacred robe only displayed upon the shore by the Emperor Michael III., at which the barbarians rushed to their boats, and fled whither they had come.

It was this faith in the special protection of the Virgin which later made the foolish Byzantines so confident that Mohammed II. could never pass the walls. An angel would descend from heaven, they believed, armed with a fiery sword, to save the city of the Virgin. Yet, spite of her sacred presence, the church was several times more or less damaged by fire, an accident, indeed, that for centuries only ensured its rising grander and more stately from the flames.

At last, in the reign of John Palæologus, a conflagration actually destroyed it.

This fell in evil times, when no treasure was at hand to plate again the golden roofs, illustrate the walls with mosaics, or raise the lines of glittering cupolas against the sky.

Saint Sophia had maintained her pomp, and faced still worse destruction; but now the day had come when her rival, the Virgin of the Blachernæ, called in vain on her worshippers for help. Before anything could be accomplished Mohammed had entered by that secret gate through which the unhappy Constantine had passed. No angel had appeared with flaming sword, nor had the Holy Robe impressed the Turks. It was

clear that the Virgin had forgotten her people; and the walls lapsed to Islamism and decay.

Of the church of the Blachernæ, nothing but the foundations and the hagiasma, protected by a tented roof, remain.

But when the long-looked-for day arrives, and the prophecy is fulfilled that the Osmanli will be driven to his proper home in Asia, and the Greeks again pass in triumph through the Golden Gate, then shall the ruined walls arise and the sanctuary, Panagia Blachernitissa, enter into another phase, more glorious than the first.

CHAPTER VIII

PALACE OF BLACHERNÆ

Hanging gardens—The planes and cypresses of Byzantium—The stealthy approach of the inevitable—Luxury of Alexius Comnenus—Degenerate treachery.

ORIGINALLY the church and palace, as I have said, stood isolated on the Thracian downs looking towards Philippopolis, defended only by the old walls of Theodosius II., which replaced those of Constantine (A.D. 449).

But when, under Heraclius, so much of that quarter of the city was desolated by the Avars, the conqueror of the Persians, conscious of its insecurity, inclosed it within a new and stronger wall, embattled, and with frequent towers, as we see it now.

History notes that these new defences had not the necessary depth of fosse or outside moat, and were therefore the weakest part of the walls; as such they were fixed on by the Turks for attack.

As the palace joined the church, so the line of the city walls, built into it as it were, made the palace at once a royal residence and a defence. A lofty succession of towers dominated all, specially

those of Isaac Angelus I. and of Amena. The lines of the double walls of Heraclius and Leo IV. the Armenian, magnificent even in decay, and perfect specimens of the military architecture of the day, are wonderfully preserved in an abundant mantle of ivy; as also the outlines of three enormous windows deeply indented on the face of the Tower of Isaac Angelus, as well as shafts of marble columns and truncated pillars, showing where balconies projected, still to be seen. A low door admits me into what was the upper story of the tower—so much has the ground risen—filled with the sordid belongings of a Turkish house; the half-veiled women huddled in a corner, and men in fez and parti-coloured clothes hurrying in from the garden with scowling looks, which only yield to a well-administered *bakshish*.

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And now, what do I find of the site of the Palace? Alas! but the figment of a terrace or support, veiled by clinging plants and mazy wreaths of boughs and stunted trees, growing out of clefts and rents of solid masonry; for elevated as is the position, it did not satisfy the fancy of the architect, who added the dignity of massive platforms to uphold stupendous terraces and balustraded avenues, hung, as it were, in air.

Standing here, I can picture the magnificent esplanade divided by double stairs, each marble flight meeting on vast spaces of polished mosaic

to separate again in a succession of gigantic steps all decked with a world of statues and entablatures, the whole raised in a series of parapets and bastions, to suit the sloping nature of the ground, one terrace specially noted at the top, near the splash of the great fountain within the hemicycle, where the Emperor deigned to repose on festal days, seated on a golden throne, indolently gazing at the townsfolk below, at once familiar and servile, wrestling and struggling as they pass.

Now the shadows fall in little booths where coffee is served, which the 'impossible Turk,' in his lowest and dirtiest aspect, calmly consumes, with his chibouk, and barely lifting his eyes upon the stranger. The little streams still trickling through the mould, the remains of the countless fountains and runnels of the palace, at present are barely sufficient for the devout Moslems who come here to perform their ablutions.

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The site of the Blachernæ was turned to the north-east, and spread over three hundred thousand metres, with a laughing prospect over the stately buildings of the city, meretricious and fantastic as architecture, but all the more gorgeous and striking from their Eastern irregularity. Delicate spires, shooting up as do now the Turkish minarets, a special characteristic of the scene, and graceful domes with their brazen tiles, blazing like fire, out of enormous blocks of

buildings with gilded roofs, some dazzling white, others dyed of a rich purple tinge, or fancifully painted in many colours, as are still seen on the parti-coloured walls about Genoa, so linked with Eastern life.

The constant interposition of trees and gardens among the buildings is another beauty peculiar to Byzantium in all ages. Vast plane trees and heavy groups of cypresses broke the lines; arches of triumph, obelisks, and columns surmounted by colossal statues, succeeded each other over the marble-lined hill in a magnificent confusion, while numerous streets and alleys of more domestic habitations descended towards the water's edge to vast quays and spacious landing-stairs where, upon the placid waters, rode vessels of all nations, interspersed by those fairylike craft now known as caïques or swallows, which have ever been, under one name or another, indigenous to the Bosphorus.

On the opposite hill, on which the busy streets of the Christian quarters of Pera, Galata, and Tophane are now crowded, there were walls and fortifications among woods, gardens, and cemeteries. Only a few houses, already appropriated by the Genoese merchants, including some wooden erections for summer use, and the outbuildings needed for the executions which invariably took place there. This quarter of the city, now the rival of Stamboul in size and riches, was

then virtually non-existent, and the land ran on into the wooded line of hills which we still see over the arsenal, leading on to the Sweet Waters of Europe, wild gardens, grassy downs, and flowery groves, with here and there a giant forest tree sloping sweetly to the shore, bordering the harbour of the Golden Horn, that superb basin, where argosies, feluccas, galleys—whole fleets indeed—can lie at anchor, their dark sails flapping in the breeze.

Afar, on the Bosphorus, rode the big ships of war, unable to enter this inner harbour; and above, on the Asiatic shore, rose Scutari, a smaller and mimic city, as highly coloured and fantastic as the rest, up to the forest-crowned heights of Bougaloo, then deserted and barren, but in our days crowded with cemeteries and graveyards of Turks and Christians.

What grander view could any palace command? Earth, sea, and heaven all fair and dazzling—a very mirror, where all that was choicest and brightest was reflected.

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We are in the eleventh century, in the reign of Alexius Comnenus, a well-known name.

The Byzantine Empire, stripped of many of its largest provinces, is tottering to that inevitable decay of a too extensive and ill-governed State. What happened in the old Roman Empire is now enacting in the new.

Already the steps of the stealthy Kurds have advanced from Persia to the Hellespont. The obscure tribe of the Russ, or Russians, are spoken of, coming from beyond the Black Sea and the frozen steppes. The northern provinces are gone, and the Danube pours down incessant hordes of invaders by land and sea—Scythians, Thracians, and Hungarians; Italy is paralysed, and unable to afford any help.

It was only by the disunion of these savage invaders that the empire was enabled to maintain itself so long.

But the loss of real power only causes the pompous follies of the Byzantine Court to increase in order to conceal it. As a sick beauty upon whom incurable disease has set its mark paints her wan cheek, draws lines round her sunken eyes, and decks her damp hair with gems, so Byzantium seeks to array herself to hide the deep wounds and gashes inflicted on her by conquest. At this time the Emperor Alexius stands forth so clear we seem to know him and touch him as an actual reality. A tall, stately figure, as becomes a royal Comnenus, moving in the vast halls of the Blachernæ, pillared with agate, alabaster, porphyry, and lapis lazuli, and lined with a wealth of gold, silver, and precious stones on wall and ceiling incredible to our meaner modern ideas.

Perhaps he is seated in the Purple Chamber (what an Eastern sound that has, and how

gorgeous!)—the brazen doors opening from the vast hemicycle where the great fountains play —in company with the Empress Irene, clothed in white, goddess-like—a fashion much affected in her day—who with her own imperial hands is occupied in dispensing robes of purple and scarlet to her favourite courtiers. Perhaps he dines in the triclinium, screened with hangings of cloth of gold, the tables adapted to a recumbent position, with glowing divans, served by Nubian slaves, while lines of dusky eunuchs stand apart.

But the Emperor is not there; the sight of his divine visage would overwhelm ordinary mortals, who would certainly be deprived of the power of eating. In consideration, therefore, of their feelings, a curtain of silver gauze, as before a shrine, conceals the splendour of his visage from the vulgar gaze, as he appears under a glittering daïs dim in the distance.

At a given signal the silver gauze rises and discloses his sublime presence, clad in silken robes of surpassing sheen, sown with pearls and gems, a crown upon his head; before him a table of encrusted silver, on which, on dishes of solid gold, such food is placed as he may condescend to taste.

Separated from his guests and from the Empress Irene, his daughter, Anna Comnena, and her husband, a comely Greek whom she has thoroughly reduced to marital submission—by

name Nicephorus—the Emperor condescends to nourish himself like any other mortal.

No dish, however exquisite, no wine, however choice, presented at the lower table can be offered to this seeming divinity on high. But oh! heavenly bliss! sometimes Alexius so far forgets his state and assumes the ordinary functions of humanity as to command some special delicacy to be sent to those privileged mortals at his feet!

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But mostly this pampered monarch is to be found reposing on his throne (for that is the appropriate term to describe the Oriental languor of his *pose*) in the presence chamber, pillared with fluted columns torn from some ancient temple, between which stand gigantic statues of his ancestors; a table of a single emerald placed before him, with bowls of precious stones, set with sweet flowers. Through the arched windows, placed high towards the cornice, shaded by gilded lattices, blazes the noonday sun, lighting up a very atmosphere of gold and gems in this too ornate hall, where he receives the senate, envoys from tributary tribes of Asia whom his magnificence strikes with awe, or messengers from the advancing Crusaders, while he recites one of the ornate discourses his daughter, Anna Comnena, reproduces with so much zest.

The throne itself is guarded by two golden lions

of such curious workmanship that they seem alive. Golden trees, shooting up around, simulate the overarching of a forest in which mechanical birds, exquisitely enamelled to the life, disport themselves on mimic branches and sing; fruit and flowers glisten among the leaves; while the golden trunks shake with a simulated tempest—so loudly, indeed, as almost at times to drown the imperial voice.

Around wait a hushed crowd of eunuchs (now domesticated in the palace), mutes, and Nubian slaves clad in white linen, the silent executors of the deadliest deeds, mixed with the superbly attired officers of the Varangian guard, senators in white mantles, the Cæsar Nicephorus, and the Greek Court with such unpronounceable names.

And so fallen are these degenerate Byzantines from the manly valour of their Roman ancestors, that those permitted to approach the imperial presence are supposed to tremble at the innocent roar of the golden lions—which, by touching a spring, feign to rouse themselves and rush forward menacingly—as they prostrate themselves before the throne.

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The name of Alexius brings us to the Crusades, and the terrible history of treachery and fraud enacted in the Blachernæ to destroy the vast armies he was too weak and too cunning openly to control.

'Listen!' cries he in his most secret chamber to his ignoble counsellors—Sebastocrator, Protosebastos, Despotis, and others.

'Listen! These chiefs, or counts as they call themselves, coming from the West must be dealt with so as to bring greater advantage to our impoverished empire.

'The great object of these strangers is to cross the Bosphorus at the narrowest part, below Constantinople. More than fifty thousand shall not pass the water at one time into Asia. Meanwhile we will supply them with provisions, if they march peacefully. But any straggling or marauding bands must be suppressed by our loyal subjects, for which we cannot be accused of breach of faith.

'Besides, as it is ill-policy to strip our provinces to feed aliens and strangers, it will be well that of the flour served out to the intruders some sacks be filled with chalk, or lime, or some such matter, which will be paid for as grain.

'The guides, too, destined to lead them over the barren regions of Asia Minor, should understand that it will be well to conduct them by the longest and most circuitous tracks, so as to inure them to the hardships and privations which, for a holy cause, they profess themselves so willing to encounter.

'Straggling parties may be cut off, to the advantage of our people, who will possess them-

selves of their arms and apparel; but this must be done by such as bear the aspect of infidels and brigands, not to be recognised as our subjects and liegemen.'

What a picture this presents of Oriental treachery engrafted on Western policy!

CHAPTER IX

THE LATINS IN CONSTANTINOPLE

Dandolo and the blind Isaac Angelus—Ambassadors from the Crusaders—Young Alexius retained as hostage—The Crusaders' terms are hard—Conclusion of the treaty deferred—Alexius betrayed by a false friend—The Latins obtain possession of the city—Short dynasty of five Latin emperors—The beginning of the end—Constantine Dragases—Blachernæ forgotten and passed by.

At the palace of the Blachernæ was enacted that extraordinary drama which resulted in the occupation of Constantinople by the Latins.

The time was the seventh and last Crusade (1203), undertaken by far inferior leaders than the former ones.

The Marquis of Montserrat bore an honoured name, and was in himself a mirror of discipline. But he was a stranger and an Italian, not even a reigning prince, and Italy had taken little or no part in the great Crusades.

The Counts of Flanders, Chartres, Blois, and St. Pol were joined with him.

The Crusaders, mostly Venetians and French, had met at Venice under the command of the Doge, the valiant old Dandolo; but their temper and

pretensions had a more powerful hold on Constantinople (that key of the East) than had been shown by those who went before. With them came the youthful Cæsar, Alexius Comnenus, second of that name, an outcast from his country, as his blind father, Isaac Angelus II., was imprisoned in the prison of Amena, beneath the palace of the Blachernæ, while his brother usurped the throne.

Thus it had come about that the young Alexius, who had escaped, finding himself at Venice, joined the Crusade, in the hope that these brave counts would restore his father; and, further, young as he was, and a fugitive, he was ready to enter easily into any conditions which might attain this end, careless of after-consequences; and it was these very engagements, be it said, which brought in the intrusion of the Latin dynasty, and a worse destruction to the unfortunate city than that even of the Ottoman.

All this is very plain; also, that as Constantinople was absolutely needful for the passage of the Crusaders, the good-will of the young Cæsar was taken advantage of by the Doge, and the other leaders of the Crusade, who came with such a fleet as had not been seen for ages, all riding along that incomparable shore where now the white kiosks and konaks of Scutari, built by beys and pashas, extend for miles, among woods and gardens, down to the site of old Chalcedon and the Islands of the Princes.

On the tenth day from the arrival of the Crusaders the siege began in form.

The war-horses, clad in their long caparisons, embarked in flat-bottomed boats (palanders), each knight standing by the side of his horse in complete armour, his helmet closed, his lance in hand, his shield hung over the side of the boat ready to his hand, the flags and banners of the several illustrious chiefs floating from the stern.

Dandolo is the first to land, and, as if to do him honour, the Bosphorus, so rough with currents and tossed by every capful of wind, lay, on that memorable July day, smooth as a glass before him.

Like the Turks afterwards, the Latins attacked the city on the side of the land walls, near the tower of Isaac Angelus I., at the back of the palace of the Blachernæ, its weakest point; while at the entrance of the Golden Horn, where a chain had been stretched across to the point of the Seraglio, the tower of Galata and the hill of Pera were stormed by bands of Venetians.

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And here we come specially to the Palace of the Blachernæ.

The blind old Isaac Angelus—descended only in the female line from the Comneni—who had for eleven years languished in the palace dungeons, the tower of which yet remains so conspicuous an object—and expecting nothing but

instant death, is suddenly drawn up from the depths of the prison, as by a miracle, to the light of day, to receive a solemn embassy from the chiefs of the Crusaders—actually in possession of the harbour of the Golden Horn and the double range of shore—within the gilded halls of the palace, still warm with the presence of his perfidious brother and usurper.

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Pale and emaciated from long imprisonment, he is placed on the throne of Constantine, hastily invested with the jewelled cap and crossed diadem of the Basileus, and habited in the richest of those gem-sown robes to be found in the palace; an ivory table is placed beside him, with scrolls and papers and purple ink for his use alone, which, as he is blind, is but a mockery of legal form.

Around, hastily summoned, are the great dignitaries of the Court, especially the introducer of the ambassadors, or dragoman, in readiness to conduct the Crusaders to his presence, and the Varangian guards, in shining casques and with loose gold *plaques* affixed to their armour.

So numerous was the attendance of this anxious throng that the vast hall of the presence chamber was filled to overflowing.

Not the first Alexius Comnenus in all his pomp had held a braver Court. As the dulled orbits of the blind Emperor travel round proudly, prostrate slaves darken the pavement in Oriental

guise, and a crowd of favourite eunuchs (twenty thousand in number) attend his pleasure, in white robes, with gold bracelets on arm and ankle, suddenly reappearing after his many years of imprisonment to do him honour.

At the entrance of the palace, grown so large by the additions of various emperors that it towers like a town on the summit of the heights, backed by the turreted line of double walls, the brazen gates are thrown open, the streets and terraces, the marble porticoes and colonnaded courts, loggia, and bastions are lined with mercenary Thracians and Dacians carrying their battle-axes as the four ambassadors from the Latin camp pass in, to treat of the young Alexius's ransom.

Many curious eyes seek out the young Cæsar, but he is not there. The gallant youth who has brought these saviours is retained as a hostage in the hands of his friends (encamped on the opposite hill of Pera) until the pledges which he gave at Venice are ratified by his father here. And for this the ambassadors are come to the Blachernæ: Matthew, Count of Montmorenci, the Seneschal of Champagne, and two Venetian magnates, attended by heralds and pages.

Great is the pomp of their reception. The chief eunuch and the chief domestic (chamberlain) usher them in, clad, as becomes knights and Crusaders, in sable armour, and on their breast a cross.

A long train of nobles and officers follow, mixed with singers, actors, and musicians, sprung up, as it were, by magic since the liberation of the prodigal old Emperor, who patronised them so liberally—and all greedily looking for a reward.

Specially to be noted is the presence of the Logothete, or secretary Nicetas, to whom we owe the history of these great events.

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And now they speak, these armed ambassadors standing before the throne.

'We are come, great Basileus'—it is the Count of Montmorenci who opens the conference, after the usual salutation and obeisance insisted on by the Eastern Emperor—'we are come, in the name of the Doge of Venice and the other chiefs of the Crusaders, to rejoice with you at the restoration of your State and return to the palace of your ancestors, and to request at your hands the ratification of the treaty made by your son Alexius at Venice.

'We have loyally performed our part of the contract: the usurper, your brother, is imprisoned, the legitimate Emperor of the East is seated on his throne'; and with a dignified motion of his hand in the direction of Isaac, crowned with the imperial pearls, and clothed in the purple robe of the dalmatica, broadly edged with uncut gems, the ambassador's lips close.

When his words had been translated by the chief interpreter there was an ominous silence. The countenance of the Emperor fell. Did he detect in Montmorenci's tone and haughty bearing a certain Gallic arrogance? And did the ominous rattle of his warlike accoutrements, echoing through the chamber as he finished speaking, proclaim the fact that he came in peace, but might depart in war, as his eyes turned significantly through the long lines of lofty windows, framed in burnished metal, towards the Golden Horn, where rode the great armed vessels of the Venetian and Genoese fleet; and on the green hills of Pera opposite, white with the tents of the Latin forces spread by thousands, with the brave soldiers of the Crusade?

'Our thanks, mighty lord,' replies Isaac Angelus at last, in a low tone, and speaking slowly, as one weighing each word, 'are as great as have been your benefits. Our imperial gratitude is unbounded to those chiefs who have relieved us from a long and painful captivity. But why is my son, the young Cæsar, not in your company? My beloved Alexius, from whom I have been parted so many years, and whom the Empress also'—turning towards the gilded recess in which she sat—'longs to embrace.'

Then the Count of Montmorenci again stood forth, and spoke with the directness of an envoy representing a great and holy cause.

'The young Cæsar, O Emperor, is well cared for in our camp. The chiefs of the Crusade applaud his gallant spirit and his filial zeal; but he has entered into certain stipulations at Venice, with the Doge and the Marquis of Montserrat, the leaders of the Crusaders, which must be fulfilled.'

'Then, in plain terms, you retain Alexius, my son, as a hostage. Is it so?' asked the Emperor, a perceptible quiver in his voice.

'Surely this is hard,' put in the Empress, a look of deep trouble on her handsome face. 'You liberate the father to incarcerate the son.'

'Not so, most exalted lady,' said Montmorenci, saluting profoundly; 'not so, but as soldiers of Christ we are bound to espouse no private wrong.'

'A private wrong you call it!' cried the old Emperor, stung into anger spite of his endeavours to be calm. 'Nothing concerning the Empire of the East, representing ten times the surface of Gaul, modern or ancient, can be so spoken of.'

'But'—and as he spoke a frown darkened Montmorenci's brow, who hastily turned as if to take counsel of his colleagues of Flanders and St. Pol—'not to enter into further discussion, I pray you, Sir Ambassador, state plainly the extent and nature of these bonds by which you esteem yourself justified in restraining our son from enjoying the liberty of our Court.'

This was a grave dilemma. That the Emperor felt it such was apparent: pressing his

shrivelled hands upon the golden supports of the throne, he leant forward. The Empress also was evidently moved: tears rose to her eyes. Both knew their royal existence was at stake. Their return to power had been so strangely sudden, neither as yet had had time to re-assume that impassible aspect proper to a potentate deemed 'Divine.' All this passed in an instant, ere one can write it.

'Willingly, great Basileus,' was the prompt reply. 'It is the very kernel of the matter on which we stand here. The young Cæsar, when so treacherously compassed by one so near of blood, bound himself, O Emperor, to submit the Greek Church and Patriarch of Constantinople to the spiritual supremacy of His Holiness the Pope of Rome.

'Secondly, to send armies and vessels to succour the Holy Land.

'Thirdly, to pay into our treasury a contribution of two hundred thousand marks of silver.'

As the echo of the last word died away among the stately lines of pillars, each one faced by the brazen effigy of a dead emperor, absolute silence fell on all that stately company. As for the Emperor, he sat like one appalled.

The utter impossibility of fulfilling these important pledges, made by an inconsiderate youth, struck him with absolute terror. Now the money might be raised by oppressing distant provinces;

the succour of the Crusaders was easy; but the supremacy of the Latin Church—impossible!

The Greeks strenuously denied the Divine succession of the Bishop of Rome, nor did they, nor would they, acknowledge any fealty or homage to him.

The approximation of the Greek and Latin nations had only more strongly accentuated these divergences.

The hatred of the unwarlike Byzantines towards the race from which they sprang was intense; their jealousy, as of the weak against the strong. Specially in creed were they divided. 'Schismatics,' 'heretics,' were terms in common use. The Roman Christians were more odious than Moslem or Pagan.

Even the altars in the churches were actually *washed* when a Latin priest had officiated!

And the Emperor was now asked to place the Pope of Rome above the Greek Patriarch!

A helpless motion of his hands towards the Empress spoke eloquently the trouble of his mind. But, spite of the impossibility of compliance, his connection with the Crusaders (who virtually had besieged and taken Constantinople) was too critical to allow of the bandying of many words, especially when his son was in their power.

'These are weighty conditions' was his prudent reply, turning round with a certain satisfaction in his sightless eyes towards the gaudily

arranged circle of officers and guards, who closely surrounded the throne, willing to display their new-pledged loyalty to the imperial prisoner they had so long forgotten. 'They are hard to accept, and difficult to perform. But,' he added, with somewhat of the dignity of his former state, 'no terms demanded by the chiefs of the Crusaders can exceed the measure of their deserts.

'Methinks, however, such weighty matters as are involved in the present embassy were better discussed in private counsel than in the presence chamber.'

The ambassadors assented. Then Isaac, assisted by a bevy of his favourites, those sexless servitors in white robes, and the stalwart officers of the Varangians, followed by the Empress and his ministers (the ambassadors forming a separate procession of their own), passed into an inner chamber to confer together; the result being that, satisfied with the Emperor's assurances, the Counts of Montmorenci, Flanders, and St. Pol, mounted on horseback, with their suite, galloped down the hill, and in a few hours returned, bringing with them the young Cæsar, known as Alexius IV.; and that he, delighting all hearts by the brilliancy of his youth and by the charm of his marvellous adventures, was shortly after crowned, with his father, under the dome of St. Sophia; and that, amid the general rejoicings, the conclusion of the noxious treaty

was diplomatically *deferred*, the armies of the Crusaders still holding the city.

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But one year, and the Blachernæ Palace was visited by other messengers.

The first came in peace, the last in war.

Three French knights and three Venetians, with girded swords, mounted on ponderous war-horses, clatter through the courts and, spite of the opposition of the angry guards, marble barriers, and sculptured portals, force themselves into the presence of the Emperor to demand the instant ratification of the treaty.

'We have fought for you, O Emperor, and have conquered,' were their haughty words. 'You have fulfilled no engagements made by your son. Unless the just claims of the Crusaders are satisfied, we hold you as an enemy, and your capital as a hostage.'

After this defiance they rode off as they had come, amid the curses and execrations of a people great only in noise and fury, only escaping instant death as they pass down the narrow streets to the shore on the long road to Pera, where the Latins lay encamped, by the fleetness of their steeds.

But one year, and the unhappy Alexius, divided between his country and his friends, desiring honourably to fulfil his pledges, but hindered by the obstinate opposition of the nation, falls into suspicion with all.

Nothing can exceed the outcry against him. The race of the Angeli is clamoured down with disdain, and a new Emperor demanded by the citizens; but no one is bold enough to accept the dangerous honour.

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But another year, and the Palace of the Blachernæ is the scene of a hideous tragedy.

In the general confusion consequent on the precarious position of the young Emperor, a prince of the house of Ducas, known as Mourzoufle—which, in the vulgar idiom, means 'he of the shaggy eyebrows'—manages to insinuate himself into his confidence.

A very Judas, this hideous wretch, who, while he affects to soothe the Emperor's passion and the Crusaders' demands, inflames the mad prejudices of the Greeks to a pitch of frenzy, and so completely blinds Alexius, now Emperor, to his treachery, that he lodges him in an adjacent chamber to himself.

At an opportune moment, in the dead of night, Mourzoufle rudely breaks into the royal apartment.

'Rise! rise, my sovereign!' he cries, rushing up to the Emperor's couch; 'the people are upon you. Rise! the palace is beset. Your guards betray you. There is no hope but in flight.'

Without a thought, Alexius hastily threw on some clothes, and with the arms of his enemy about him, flies down a private stair.

Unhappy Alexius! The private stair leads into a prison, those same vaults of the Amena, so near to the palace floors, in which his father, Isaac Angelus, languished so many years.

Seized, stripped, scourged, loaded with chains, Alexius lay until it suited the hideous Mourzoufle to end his misery—whether by rope or poison history does not say. But it expressly records that Alexius died in the presence of this traitor.

Mourzoufle, hailed by the capricious Byzantines as a patriot and a saviour, was immediately proclaimed emperor from the stately terrace of which there remain some traces under the wide-spreading plane trees at Haivan Serai.

And the prudent Doge, still encamped on the opposite hills, would have capitulated, had not Mourzoufle refused all the terms accepted by Alexius and his father.

The storming of Constantinople follows. The ugly traitor, beaten by the Count of Flanders, fled, leaving his buckler on the field of battle.

It is noted that, as Mourzoufle escaped by the golden gates of the Blachernæ, the palace was entered by the chiefs of the Crusaders on the other side. Thus the capital of the East, still bearing the name of Constantine, passed into the possession of the Latins.

Nicetas, who gives us the history, was himself present at the storming of the city, which presented all those disgusting episodes that neither

the 'decent and respectable' Marquis of Montserrat, nor that 'mirror of chivalry,' Baldwin, Count of Flanders, could do more than mitigate.

What is of general interest is the long list of works of Grecian art which were either burnt or broken, or had disappeared—an irreparable loss to all ages.

Nicetas specially mentions the bronze statues of the victorious charioteers from the Hippodrome; the she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus—the arms of old Rome; an incomparable statue of Helen of Troy; Hercules, by the master-hand of Lysippus, of gigantic proportions; a colossal statue of Juno from Samos; Pallas, thirty feet in height; to say nothing of the relics of the saints and the dismal spoliation of the church of St. Sophia: altars turned into gaming-tables, and chalices used as cups for ungodly wassails. All this the more to be deplored, as Constantinople, like Rome, was never a self-producing capital, but had, by conquest, acquired a large share of the spoils of Grecian cities, and copies and *repliche* of such as were lost or not attainable.

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Now follow the reigns of the five Latin emperors—an indelible stain on the honour of the Crusaders. Baldwin, of Flanders and Hainault—Dandolo, the Doge, having declined on account of his age—was the first to wear the crown.

To Baldwin is specially assigned the palace

of the Blachernæ, which, from its commanding position over the harbour and arsenal, and the close backing of the double line of land walls, forms an important key of the city defences.

He was proclaimed Emperor close by, in the chapel of the Phare, a quarter near the palace, still called by the same name—in the midst of such a scene of burning walls, bloodshed, mangled corpses, and massacre, as has rarely been exceeded even in Constantinople.

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Like shadows they come and they depart, these Latin emperors, usurpers all, but full of every virtue, according to the chronicles.

One, however, of this Latin dynasty, Peter Courtenay, husband of the Princess Yolande, possesses a special interest, as being the direct ancestor of the present Earls of Devon, of Powderham Castle, Devonshire.

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Under Baldwin II. the Empire of the Latins was reduced to a name. Hemmed in by the Greek Emperor at Nicæa of Bithynia, on the opposite shore of Asia Minor, and balloted between the factions of the Venetians and Genoese on the hills close by, the suburb of Galata was assaulted under his very eyes on that last terrible July night, when shouts of triumph and cries of despair announce that Michael Palæologus has reached Constantinople.

At the Golden Gate, on the low shore of the Seven Towers, he enters by a successful fraud, and is instantly in the midst of the city.

The Greeks rise as one man. Every quarter is in arms, and cries of 'Long life to Palæologus!' 'Victory to our august Emperor!' 'Down with the Latin robbers!' sound as a chorus to the boom of guns.

Far away, on the heights, at the opposite end of the city, Baldwin lay, at the palace of the Blachernæ, wrapped in such deep sleep (so sudden had been the onslaught, so rapid the victory) that to his slumbering brain the cries and maledictions, growing each instant louder and more distinct came as the coinage of a disordered dream. A moment, and the great officers of the palace, the despots, Sebastocrates, Sebastes, Magistri, Opatharies, and a whole troop of terrified eunuchs come rushing in.

'The Greeks, the Greeks are upon us!' they cry. 'The palace is lost! Rise, Basileus! Fly! To the Bosphorus! Fly!' And acting on their own advice, they vanish as quickly as they had come.

So complete is the rout, so servile the Court, no idea of resistance suggested itself to them or to the Emperor.

Calling a few still faithful Latins around him, Baldwin turns his back upon the palace and flies down the innumerable flights of marble stairs.

The darkness of the night favours him, but in his downward course he drops the Grecian bonnet which he wore, topped with a precious ruby, and his purple buskins, the very emblems of empire, afterwards picked up and presented to Michael.

Half naked and shoeless, Baldwin reaches the strand at the extremity of the Golden Horn where it curves under the green hills of Eyoub, finds, by a happy chance, a frail and crazy boat, which bears him to his fleet on the Sea of Marmora, and, sailing swiftly with the morning breeze, he safely reaches the island of Eubœa.

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Now who can tell in words of sober prose the pæan of victory, the frantic joy, when, one month later, Michael Palæologus, uniting the long lines of the two Grecian families of the Palæologi and the Comneni, entered the Golden Gate in triumph?

As he passed the marble arch, which still remains, then bright with gold entablatures, the devout Michael dismounted from his horse and, causing the miraculous Virgin of the Blachernæ to be borne before him, *seemed* to follow her through the city to the threshold of St. Sophia.

But where was he to live? The splendid Palace of the Blachernæ had changed hands so often, and was so defiled with smoke and dirt, from the filthy habits of the Latins, that the new Emperor could not inhabit it until it was duly

cleansed, and was forced meanwhile to betake himself to the forsaken halls of the old Palatium, left for centuries to the tender mercies of owls, bats, and spiders. The work of renovation completed, he removed to the Blachernæ, for ages accepted as the dynastic residence of the Greek sovereigns, when new scenes of fiendish cruelty were enacted in the beauteous chambers—the triumphant Michael himself denied Christian burial by the ungrateful subjects he had freed from the Latin yoke. Such was the fickle temper of the Greeks, who, with the equally barbarous Latins, were in time to give place to the Turks, not to be outdone by their Christian predecessors.

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And now we stand face to face with the last of the royal tenants of the palace—Constantine Dragases, of the line of the Palæologi; young, and of a tall and noble presence, indicating the heroic soul within.

The Empire began with a Constantine; it was fated to fall under the same name, a coincidence similarly repeated at Rome, where Augustus, as first emperor, might, from a pagan Elysium, contemplate the end of his last feeble successor, Augustulus.

Extraordinary to relate, nothing is recorded of Constantine during his life at the palace of the Blachernæ unbecoming a Christian prince.

Surrounded by enemies, and with the sound of

the footsteps of the approaching Turks ever in his ears, he escaped the hideous temptation to imperial crime. He was contemplating a marriage with a Grecian princess when his fate came upon him.

The advance of Mohammed II. belongs to the history of the Bosphorus, by which he crossed into Europe, the Asiatic highway into Constantinople already chosen by Darius, Chosroes, and the Chagan.

What concerns us is that the Turks' principal assault was directed specially against that part of the land walls which backed the palace of the Blachernæ, always esteemed the weakest point in the long line of defence.

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On the evening before the general assault, the principal Greeks and the most courageous of his allies were summoned to the palace to listen to Constantine's last words. Beside the Emperor, save for his purple mantle habited like one of his own soldiers, stood the two men destined in a few hours to work his ruin—the great Duke Notaras, next in honour to himself, already half a traitor; and the Genoese adventurer, most trusted of all, John Giustiniani. Phranza, an eye-witness of these scenes, gives us the details. Constantine, brave as he was, could not impart a confidence he did not feel. Nothing short of a direct miracle could save Constantinople.

The Himatia, or image of the Virgin, had been exposed in a solemn procession, and no supernatural consequence ensued.

'Afterwards,' says Phranza, 'they wept, they embraced, and, regardless of their wives, families, and future, devoted their lives to the cause of the emperor.'

Thus they parted, but before night Constantine, surrounded by the bravest of his warriors, descended the hill in the twilight to St. Sophia.

For the last time his eyes rested on the fair terraces and the imperial lawns sloping to the Bosphorus, the parapets, white in the dim light, leading down to the poetic shores, where graceful caïques balanced on the current; passing by waterfalls and fountains wreathed with flowers and fruit, the effigies of past emperors, among emerald bosquets and marble dryads and nymphs, half hid by the trees. Cautiously stepping, not to wake an echo, for the shores were already closely encompassed by the Turks under the command of Batha Ogli, captain of the fleet, the little band passed along the hill to St. Sophia, where at the portal stood the Patriarch Gennadius. There devoutly communicating at the high altar, Constantine offered up his life to redeem his faith and his people. Returning to the Blachernæ for a little sleep, he again called those about him who still remained, and begged their forgiveness of aught in which he might have involuntarily offended.

Then, mounting his war-horse in the outer court of the hemicycle, the sculptures glistening under the mild splendour of the moon, he passed out of the brazen gates for the last time to await daybreak upon the walls.

This happened in May 1453.

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No history has recorded the fate of this beautiful palace under the Turks.

No Moslem, I believe, ever inhabited it. The magnificent materials accumulated under such a succession of prodigal emperors: the alabaster, lapis lazuli, and porphyry on the walls; the green and roseate pillars and sculptured doors, with rare tracings and chisellings; the costly balustrades of the great terraces; and the five churches of the rarest materials, long served as a quarry for the greedy sultans, eager to build mosques and *turbehs*, and to repair the great gashes in the walls and towers.

Thus the palace died an ignominious death. The very ruins vanished, as do all ruins under the Turks, disappearing mysteriously from sight and memory under the repeated assaults of a mean and needy population, who plant orchards and cabbages, and burn lime and charcoal among the grandest monuments man has ever raised.

The quarter of the Blachernæ, for ages the centre of imperial power and luxury, in which was enacted the history of the Eastern world for so

many centuries, is now perhaps the most squalid and ignored portion of all that vast city.

Steamers and caïques every day touch at the little pier by which you reach Haivan-Serai, and land crowds of Mussulmans, bound to the mosque and cemetery of Eyoub, specially on Fridays, along with cargoes of beautiful Greek and Turkish women, seeking the pastoral recesses of the valley of Sweet Waters of Europe, and tourists from many lands: but who among them know or care to ask where stood this once magnificent monument?

CHAPTER X

THE WALLS

Kind nature veils open wounds—The Adrianople Gate—Lovely vision of Olympus—The sinister 'Crooked Gate'—Sultan Mohammed leads the assault—Array of the defenders—Constantine deserted by the mercenaries—'The City of God is fallen.'

THE walls of Rome, of which we hear so much, are not to be compared in height, strength, or picturesqueness with those of Constantinople. Here the double and even triple line still exists, the latter built by Heraclius, who, warned by an attack of the Avars (626), renewed the entire line by sea and land, inclosing the palace and church of the Blachernæ. To Heraclius' work a further rampart was added by Leo V., the Armenian, and many other emperors have left their mark, notably the Phrygian Theodosius; the walls pierced by little openings, round which the wild vines still twine, where the archers and slingers watched the movements of approaching armies, and, themselves hidden by the outworks and barbicans, hurled Greek fire and showers of darts upon the naked bodies of Bulgarians or Kurds.

Landwards, there are, even now, three walls

still standing in many parts, for the deep fosse is flanked by a third barrier; these, the original work of Constantine the Great, built of brick and stone, extending for five miles, from the Seven Towers on the Bosphorus to the quarters of the Blachernæ and Phare. For fifteen centuries they had stood more or less intact, spite of earthquakes and the assaults of catapults, balistæ, battering-rams, and culverines, until that last fatal struggle between race and race, Christ and Mohammed, fought out in this lonely wilderness looking towards the unpitying plains. Then Varangians, Janissaries, Tartars, and Greeks rolled in a death struggle in this green ditch before which I stand, the cherry and the almond flowers casting white petals on the ground, and peaceful rows of vegetables rooting deep down into the fertile earth.

The strong, strong walls, beaten at last, and gaping with open wounds! But nature—kind nature—comes to their aid with a beneficent covering of ferns, plants, ivy, and even trees, clinging to the stones with iron grip, knitting all together in a mantle of greenery, under which some goats crop a little scanty grass, and a pariah dog suns himself in the heat.

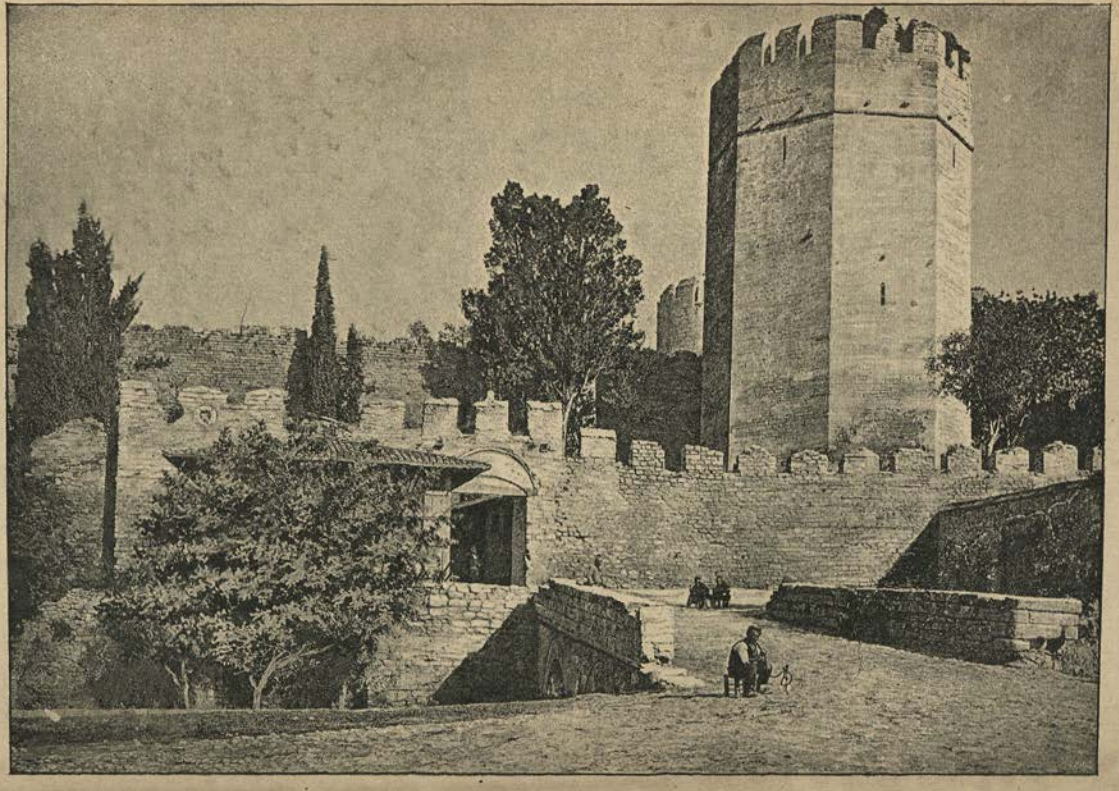
A more lonely and suggestive solitude cannot be found; full of a hushed calm, for it is the fall of a vast city, never to rise again, which nature mourns in her abundance.

En parenthèse—do not forget when here to visit what was once the church of St. George, now the Mosque of Mir-i-nah, daughter of Suleiman I., which is the highest point of Stamboul; and the palace of Belisarius (Takur Serai), also very near. Not far off is the Mosque of Mohammed II., on the site of the church of the Twelve Apostles.

Twenty-eight was the original number of the gates on land and waterside, following down to the shore of the Golden Horn. Of these, many have disappeared or have been walled up. Six only are now open on the land or northern side. Here the Crusaders who came by land encamped; in all, four armies—beginning with Peter the Hermit (A.D. 1090) and his undisciplined mob, stained with the blood of all the nations he had passed, to be followed a year after by the regular army under Godfrey de Bouillon.

When 'the walls' are now mentioned, it is the land side, looking towards Thrace and Adrianople, which is meant. On the shore of the Golden Horn they are things of the past, the gates on that busy strand having been long replaced by landing-piers and jetties, at which the rather dirty steamers which ply up and down now touch.

As I stand outside the Adrianople Gate, on the summit of the line of hills on which Stamboul lies, the great breaches of the siege are clearly visible, rending asunder the solid foundations, the cleft



a colourless scene. Whither they are all going amid this desolation seems a mystery. They dismount in a solemn, leisurely way: some turn towards a battered little café, where they will sit and smoke under a tilted roof of branches, for hours immovable; others are bound to one of the many cemeteries that border the arid road; the remainder, a better class, with horses awaiting them, wander vaguely off along the numerous tracks dividing the open plains.

The glare is blinding, but what a view! In front, under the promontory on which I stand, spreads the blue expanse of the Sea of Marmora, which might be boundless, for the shores are low and melt into a mist of golden haze, mysterious and chaotic. The rock of Leander lies midway in the channel, passed by incessant steamers, vessels with white sails set, and dancing caïques; little points, like uncut emeralds, mark the Princes' Islands, floating on the waves; in the far distance the faint outline of a huge mountain, vague, shadowy, undefined, only that as one gazes there are traces of dim snowfields, still lingering on the outline of its broken summits.

This grateful vision of coolness revealed in the hot atmosphere I know to be Mount Olympus of Bithynia, far away over ancient Broussa, the seat of the Turkish race in their native Asia. I do not want the dragoman to tell me this, though he insists on being heard.

I had climbed many hills, and had over and over again strained my eyes towards Asia to catch the outline of Olympus, visible both from the high lands of Pera and from the hills at the back of Therapia. Everyone but I had seen it, and gave varied and provoking accounts of its form and beauty, the strange isolated grandeur of the outline, and of the crystal fields of snow on its summit.

Now it was revealed to me when I least expected it, a heavenly peep, as into an ethereal world, high in the clouds; and a whole new world with it, in all that lovely fertile region of oil and wine, of flowers and plants, of woods and forests, of pastures and fresh green valleys, which cling about it at Broussa.

It is a thankless office to describe a view, taken at a glance, each part fitting into the other instantaneously; to set off in long phrases what comes to one spontaneously, and to feel that in the detailing the charm has fled. Let me rather be the guide to others—to see it with their own eyes.

TOWERS OF ISAAC COMNENUS AND OF AMENA

Near by, on a bare spot, on what is supposed to be part of one of the colossal terraces which supported the Palace of the Blachernæ (the small mosque of Aivat Effendi resting on it), I am

brought suddenly face to face with the majestic outline of the towers of Isaac Angelus I.

Isaac Comnenus, the son of Michael Stratioticus (1157), successor of the infamous Theodora and her sister Zoe, not to be confounded with his successor, the luxurious Isaac Angelus, father of Alexius IV., certainly inhabited the towers which he built; and close by, adjoining, is the other tower of the Royal prison of the Amena, so often mentioned in Byzantine history, still upright, when the palace which it defended is but a pile of dust.

Now this prison will always be associated with the name of Andronicus, one of the many sensational criminals who occupied the throne, a royal Adonis, grandson of the great Alexius Comnenus, and last of the direct line of the Comneni. His fifteen years' confinement in this prison, into which his devoted wife managed to penetrate and to liberate him, his escape and wanderings in the East, his return, the subsequent deception of several royal ladies, his usurpation of the purple, and the fiendish cruelties he perpetrated, including the murder of a young Emperor and of his mother, and of the Comnenan family generally, is a romance.

Why this tower is called Amena no one knows; but tradition, stepping in where history fails, declares that the first prisoner was called Michael Amena.

Of the imprisonment here of the Emperor

Isaac Angelus II., successor to Andronicus (1135), his blindness, and rescue by the intervention of his son Alexius, an exile at Venice, I have just spoken.

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And now, with Spiro, my dragoman—for you can never go alone among the Turks, especially in these remote localities—I stand before the old gate of Charsias, now Egri Kapousi, the crooked gate (*Kerksporta*), sinister through all time as being that by which the Turks entered the city at the moment when the miraculous fish of Baloukli were frying in the pan!

So rapid now is the destruction of the walls for building materials, that the Kerksporta is almost buried under a mass of stones, but the low archway may still be traced.

'While all the Greeks' (says the contemporary historian Ducas), 'headed by the Emperor Constantine, were vigorously fighting to repulse the Turks, and turn the assault from a part of the walls which had crumbled under the war-engines, the will of God led the enemy to this gate (generally closed, but opened by the Emperor for the convenient passage of his men), at once discovered by the Turks, who, to the number of fifty, rushed in and, scaling the walls, planted the green flag on the nearest tower, and with loud cries shouted: "Victory! the city is ours!"

'The fifty Turks, instantly followed by others,

soon blocked up the low gate, and spread themselves along the walls in the direction of the gates of Adrianople and St. Romanus, thus taking the Greeks in rear when they least expected it. And so it came about that this obscure little gate was the principal cause of the taking of Byzantium.'

This may be amusing as an historical legend, for such a great event as the fall of Constantinople is sure to be made the pretext of a series of fables; but in reality the city fell not by the accidental discovery of a gate or a postern, but by the desperate valour of the Turks.

The very image on the coins which remain of the legendary Mohammed, his deep-set eyes flashing round in paroxysms of sudden passion, to deal death on those who dared to oppose him by word, or even look, is awful. The terrible conqueror, who, disputing with Gentile Bellini, the artist sent by the Republic of Venice to paint his portrait[1] (a perilous honour), as to the drawing of a decapitated trunk, called up a slave, and with his own scimitar then and there struck off his head; who, conscious of many and hideous vices, when accused by the agha of the janissaries of lingering in his harem, flashing with sudden rage, seized on a beautiful Circassian, who had pleased his eye, and with one blow ended her harmless

[1] This portrait is still extant, and in the possession of Sir A. H. Layard at Venice.

life; and to the last envoy despatched to him by Constantine, swore by the living Allah that 'if he returned he should be flayed alive'—seemed a being created by some Satanic power to end the feeble Empire of the East in a cataclysm of horror.

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The night before the assault had been busily passed by the Turks in silently moving the troops, cannon, fascines, battering-rams, and culverines to the edge of the fosse, which separated them from the line of walls looming in darkness.

Each Moslem ranged under his own dervish or sheikh, for the siege to them assumed the sanctity of a crusade against infidels; the more disciplined troops formed further back, on the Thracian plains, each opposite the gate destined as their special point of attack.

Under pain of death silence is imposed; but the silence of assembled thousands is physically impossible, and the watchmen on the walls felt their hearts sink within them for fear.

The break of day shows the great Sultan himself, mounted on a Turcoman war-horse, an iron mace in one hand and his brandished scimitar in the other, his viziers, pashas, and captains around, at hand a train of Nubian mutes, the silent executors of his will, backed by ten thousand picked janissaries.

'Fight, fight, for God and the Prophet!' he

shouts in a voice of thunder rising above the clang of warlike instruments, drums, trumpets, cymbals, and the shrill cry of pipes. 'Down with the Giaours! Gold and gems, captives and slaves for the victors, and to him who first mounts the walls a kingdom!'

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The first upon the breach was the gigantic Hassan, followed by twelve janissaries, their ascent rendered easier by the mountain of corpses which already fill the fosse.

For a moment a huge figure is seen outlined against the sky, to fall headlong into the yawning chasm, and fight upon his knees, until, overcome by a storm of darts and arrows, stones and missiles, he sinks among the unknown multitude to die.

But the deed has been accomplished, the outer walls are scaled, and soon those sacred ramparts of Constantine, regarded by barbarian invaders with such superstitious terror, rising before me so majestic, even in ruins, as I stand in the dusty road—swarm with a promiscuous horde of Turks. This on the land side, while below, on the Bosphorus, the Turkish artillery thunders on the Greek galleys, and on that fair amphitheatred city, which, as it were, in its delicate indentations, opens its unprotected bosom to the foe.

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In the dead of night, Constantine Palæologus,

Dragases, son of Manuel II. and Irene of Serbia, last Emperor of New Rome, and destined so nobly to end the succession of his great ancestors, mounting his horse in the hemicycle of the Palace of the Blachernæ, rides out to face the foe at the head of his small garrison, composed of mercenaries (for the Byzantines would not fight), Aragonians, Catalans, and Venetians, headed by John Giustiniani, who had arrived with two galleys and three hundred chosen men.

Each of his generals has his allotted place: the Emperor himself and Giustiniani to defend the foot of the walls, the turreted summits, escarpments. breaches; Cardinal Isidore, a peripatetic priest sent by the Pope, 'the amphitheatre of lions,' meaning the Hippodrome; Lucas Notaras, great duke and admiral, descending to defend the walls of the port; the Venetian envoy, Minotto, entrusted with the external circuit of the Palace of the Blachernæ; Trevisano, the Acropolis (the present Old Seraglio) and the Golden Horn; the Florentine Julian, the Palace of the Seven Towers and the Bucolion on the shore; and Theophilus Palæologus, a division near the important gate of St. Romanus, opposite the centre of the Turkish camp.

The darkness is profound—not a star visible. Stationed at the foot of the tower which flanks the Kerksporta, the Emperor and Phranza the

historian long look out, listening to the hollow murmurs of the besiegers encamped below, the breezes sighing like the precursors of an approaching tempest—a tempest, indeed, of Turcomans, Kurds, Dervishes, Santons, and Asiatics, gathered from all quarters of that immense Moslem empire, preparing to thunder forth the fell attack.

Then they separate, Constantine to take his place at the gate of St. Romanus, Giustiniani beside him; Phranza to escape and tell us the tragic story of the siege.

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Now the gate of St. Romanus, or of the Cannon—from the monstrous instrument of war invented by Urban the Hungarian, needing seven hundred men to work it, which was directed by Mohammed against it—is identified to all time as the spot where the Emperor found his grave. He had chosen this post, as being the most exposed to the enemy's artillery and to the fiercest assaults. The locality is ascertained by the presence of a little stream, then called Lycus, which flows through a meadow, now Yeni Bagtcheh. I would gladly believe it: these details lend such point to the romantic tale.

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The assault has lasted for many hours. The Greeks are yielding under storms of arrows, darts, balls from the ballistæ, Greek fire and scalding bitumen hurled on them incessantly. As one

column draws back another fills its place, the attack being by this time general by land and sea; but the Emperor stands firm, watching all, the great standard of the Palæologi floating at his side.

Now it is the turn of the janissaries, annihilating all before them as they swarm on through the breaches like locusts. Then it is the Greeks who gain a momentary victory: Constantine encouraging by word and gesture, 'Here! to the breach,' shouts he, brandishing his sword, 'for God and the Virgin!' But Giustiniani, wounded by a bullet or arrow in the arm-pit, draws back, followed by his men.

For a moment even Constantine stands appalled, but quickly recovers himself.

'Your wound,' he cries, 'is slight; it can be dressed here; the danger is pressing. Your presence imperative. Whither would you go?'

'By the same road,' is the reply, 'which God has opened to the Turks,' and Giustiniani passes out by one of the rents within the inner wall, followed by the greater part of the Latin mercenaries.

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The number of the Ottomans is fifty, perhaps a hundred, times greater than the Greeks. As yet they had resisted; but when the janissaries cluster in the towers and embrasures, thick as bees, hope fled, and Constantine knows that he is vanquished.

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Still his voice is heard amid the din: 'For God and the Virgin!' as he retreats step by step, to rally at the gate, Nicephorus and Theophilus Palæologus, Cantacuzene, Cattaneo, the lord of Phocæ, and a few faithful nobles still clinging to his standard. Then a sudden cry of horror rises: 'The city of God is fallen!' and a general panic ensues.

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This was at the Kerksporta, by which the Turks had entered the city.

Nicephorus and all the imperial generals perish, but to the last the figure of Constantine dominated all, brandishing his weapon to arrest his flying troops, and as he casts from him his purple mantle and the golden-worked helmet on his head, his plaintive cry 'Is there no Christian who will cut off my head?' is remembered.

Still he fights on; a pike struck him violently in the face. To the last worthy of his fame, he slew the janissary who had launched it, then falls and is seen no more.

A mad *mêlée* follows; without him, resistance was in vain. Such Greeks as were not crushed in the gateway fly towards the city, and the army of the Turks rushes through the inner walls, where they are soon joined by those who had forced the gate of Phenar on the harbour.

Whether the dead Constantine was found is not certain. A body buried under a heap of

slain *passed* for that of the Emperor, from the golden eagles embroidered on the shoes. Mohammed, alarmed at the possible escape of so formidable a rival, gave it decent burial, save the head, which was cut off and exhibited in the Augusteum, then embalmed, and, Tartar-like, sent round to the principal cities of Asia.

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Thus, after a siege of fifty-three days, Constantinople fell, and her empire passed to the Moslem. Then it was that the senators and magnates, a promiscuous throng, rolled towards the port like a torrent, to find certain death, while a terrified remnant of nuns, women and children, the weak and the aged, the sick, halt and blind, crowded the churches, where they lay prostrate before the sacred icons, those fortunate enough to gain entrance into St. Sophia firm in the belief that the Moslems would be miraculously arrested by an angel bearing a fiery sword, before which the Ottomans would fly, not only from Constantinople, but from Europe and even Asia, to the borders of Persia and the Euphrates!

CHAPTER XI

THE SELAMLIK

The Selamlik—*En route* for Yildiz Kiosk—Abdul Hamid's residence—Simple life of the Padishah—Abdul Hamid's decided opinions—Waiting for the procession—Glittering array of household troops — Ladies must keep in the background—Complete absence of Asiatic pomp.

THE finest thing I have seen is the Selamlik, the *baise-mains* or *levée*, as you may please to call it, when the Sultan shows himself to the faithful on his way to the mosque, which, according to the rules of his religion, he must visit every Friday.

On this occasion, being the feast of Bairam, the Selamlik was much grander than on ordinary occasions.

All other padishahs, including the late Sultan, Abdul Aziz, performed this ceremony at some great mosque, generally at St. Sophia, arriving in a caïque from one of the many overgrown palaces on the Bosphorus, and riding up in state from the Old Seraglio to occupy the gold-latticed pew, with every ceremony of Oriental pomp, attended by the Sheikh-ul-Islam (the Mohammedan

pope), and all the pashas, beys, viziers, and high dignitaries of the empire. But the present Sultan, Abdul Hamid, is a nervous man.

Ever since the tragic death of his uncle Aziz, by assassination or suicide (everyone holds his own theory), and the madness of his brother and predecessor Murad, who is either dead, or shut up (no one knows) close to where he lives, he has obstinately refused to move from the small kiosk, or *palazzetto*, called Yildiz, about three miles from the city, on the European range of hills bordering the Bosphorus; thus entirely altering all the former splendid arrangements, and reducing the Selamlik to a comparatively commonplace affair.

At one time it was urged that the presence of the Sultan in Stamboul was obligatory during Ramazan; but as the Commander of the Faithful is not only an absolute monarch, but the head of his religion, like the Queen of England, Hamid has decided that St. Sophia shall be abandoned, as leading him into too much danger in traversing the city, and exposing him to the possible explosion of bombs, or attacks of conspirators, and that he will worship at his country retreat.

To be present at the Selamlik, an order can be obtained from any of the various embassies. My agreeable friend, Pangeris Bey, got me mine, and I started at eleven with my dragoman, in a comfortable *fiacre* with the usual excellent horses and trusty coachman.

The way to Yildiz lies through the draggle-tail streets of Pera—where all nations seem to have agreed to be tawdry and dirty—into comparative country, on a very dusty road, under a burning sun; an inland prospect, with nothing to offer but an aspect of bare downs, void of trees. I pass by the large square of the artillery ground, with a vast building opposite, pointed out as the barracks. But it must be something more, for I am told that, after the palace of the Old Seraglio had been burnt down, Abdul Aziz sometimes used it as a city house of call, when he did not go to the palace of the Seraskierate, in the centre of Stamboul. Behind there are many cypresses, an attempt at public gardens, and burial grounds, where Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Armenians are buried, but unhonoured, however, by cypresses, which are reserved exclusively for the Turk. Beyond is the great field of the dead, an immense tract on the summit of the hill, with a glorious view over land and sea.

But at present I have to do with the living, not with the dead, so I will reserve my strictures on the turban-headed ruins until another time, as they do look a trifle less crazy than at Pera. Up hill and down dale we drive on a most inconvenient road. Crowds of people are everywhere, some resting with a majestic air under a tree or seated cross-legged on an old carpet, tranquilly surveying the scene, others galloping by

on sleek Arab horses, as light-footed as the wind —a medley of glaring vests, long figured caftans, and baggy trousers, in every colour of the rainbow, scarlet, magenta, blue, and pink, standing out on the perfectly sickening clouds of dust, which no one seems to mind.

This is the land of indifference.

The ground is without a single plant or shrub that does not grow better in England ; no palms, no olives, no stone pines, only a scant northern vegetation, which, considering the latitude, is surprising, and must be caused by the vicinity of the Black Sea, with its chill blasts coming direct from the steppes of Russia.

But *en revanche* the peeps of the Bosphorus between the hills are full of beauty.

I have, however, no time to sentimentalise ; we are going too fast. The carriage of an ambassador is in front, bound on the same errand. I know it by the kavass on the box, with his fez, his gold-braided jacket, and his richly inlaid belt.

I follow, smothered in dust.

How people go about here in open carriages I cannot understand. The ladies in front, gaily dressed, with fluttering parasols, must arrive as white as millers.

Lining the road—a very steep one, climbing up and down quite regardless of consequences, probably on some plan traced out on paper by a grand vizier, or perhaps a sultan, who knew

as much about engineering as a cow: but so are things done in Turkey—there are several cafés overshadowed by a large tree. The Turks love trees, and never cut them down, always gathering on fine days under some vast trunk at tables, smoking and drinking cups of the unstrained coffee which I think so unpalatable. All naturally are men, for women are denied these pastimes.

Then the eternal tram-cars rush by, and some common women, veiled of course, and dressed in a loose *ferejeh* and head-gear of the same striped stuff (that being the present fashion) of extraordinary brilliancy, get out, and gather on a bank. I never saw such crude, bold tints in any European shop, and cannot conceive where they get the materials: Oriental they certainly are not, or they would be subdued and harmonious.

From their post of vantage the women sit and stare, and show their legs outrageously; for, be it observed, the face only is sacred, and legs to the knee are a parliamentary spectacle.

Up another steep hill we gallop; I have not counted them, but we must have passed a dozen. I am not at all timid with these excellent Turkish cobs, endowed with almost human intelligence. The pair my dragoman Spiro has engaged for me think nothing of an ascent as straight as a wall, and never back, jib, or lose their wind. Wonderful little horses! They never flinch, and the loads

I see carried over masses of stones called a road are astounding.

Then down another hill, we descend on groups of little houses planted about in shady grounds, for no one but a pasha or a banker seems to have a house of decent size.

At the top, a small mosque discloses itself dazzling white, standing apparently in the fields, with minarets and a general look of elegance, very different from the usual tumble-down aspect.

Now we see detachments of dark-coated soldiers in fez, quite on the sky-line (but that is not high, for nothing is elevated here; all is low and level), and the outline of a palace kiosk, modern and small, reveals itself rising out of a cincture of dark groves.

This is Yildiz Kiosk, where lives the Commander of the Faithful, Abdul Hamid. It is not a palace at all, but originally was a summer villa, where his uncle Aziz used to pass a few hours in the summer heats. To live in such a place never entered into his imagination, when Beshiktash and Dolmabatchke, the vast edifices he had erected, were too small for him and his harem.

The park, which is well wooded, is spacious, with grassy slopes, diversified with other kiosks, also shaded with groves, descending to a quay on the Bosphorus. It has most charming views over land and sea, Europe and Asia; including the masses of white houses in Scutari opposite,

and that vast region of water, stretching away to the mountains over Broussa and all that fair coast; and near at hand the broad channel of the deep blue Bosphorus, with its fringe of white palaces, steamers, caïques, and vessels with sails set, gliding by every instant.

In this park the Sultan received the German Emperor. He met him on the quay, and led him and the Empress up the winding road which scales the hill to a romantic *maisonnette* set apart for their use.

The park is full of similar buildings of various sizes—all built of wood, for the Moslem, who does not travel, but loves change and nature. views the variety of moving from one pretty bower to another in the light of a journey for change of air.

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Thus it may be remarked *en passant*, that not even for the German Emperor did the Sultan move out of the prescribed space to which he has condemned himself. He never accompanied his guests anywhere—not even to St. Sophia—but sent the Emperor in the twelve-oared gilt caïque, all gold and purple, like Cleopatra's, down the Golden Horn to view his fleet and arsenal. This is a most regrettable circumstance, for no Sultan has mounted the throne of Mohammed II., more blameless in private life, or endowed with more sentiments of general humanity.

Hamid has travelled in Western Europe, and has used his eyes. The hideous custom of the murder of infant nephews—hitherto observed as a state law, in order to keep the direct succession secure—has ceased under his reign. How many mothers have broken their hearts in vain, as one by one their little ones were cut off by this inexorable law. The Sultan's nephews now go about secure. All honour to him!

Abdul Hamid is modest in the requirements of his harem. As Padishah, he receives yearly a tribute of beautiful Circassian and Georgian slaves, but these kadines are considered simply as household goods, consigned to the care of his mother, and educated and married.

Like the Pope, the Sultan eats alone, seated near a window overlooking the park and the Bosphorus, except on special occasions when he receives, with the most finished courtesy, royal visitors, ambassadors, and their wives, every European luxury being understood, and served upon the board.

Habitually he only drinks water, brought to the palace in casks, under special precautions. His food is extremely plain, consisting chiefly of vegetables, served in silver saucepans, presented to him at table sealed.

No one works harder than Hamid. He takes but few hours of sleep, and sometimes passes the entire night pen in hand, signing every document

himself, from the appointment of a governor to the lowest officer of the palace.

Like most Orientals, he is an early riser. After the prayers and ablutions enjoined by his religion—and he is eminently a pious Turk—he drinks a cup of coffee, and then begins smoking cigarettes, which (as was the case with Louis Napoleon) he continues all day. At 10 A.M. he receives the reports of his ministers, works alone, or with his secretaries, till one, when he eats ; then he drives in the grounds, or floats in a gilded caïque on a lake for a couple of hours (never leaving the park of Yildiz, except to go to the mosque); after which he returns to preside at the Council of State, or to receive ambassadors or ministers.

His dinner is at sunset, when the national pillaf of rice, and sweets, are served, with sherbet and ices.

After this he betakes himself to the selamlik to receive pashas and generals of high rank, such as Osman Ghazi ; or oftener, he disappears into the harem, to pass the evening hours with wives, mother, and children. Music is his delight, and, *en petit comité*, he himself takes his place at the piano. As he believes in no one but himself, he must see all, know all, examine all with his own eyes—a system, however praiseworthy, causing immense delay. To this, as being of the old school of non-progression, he is indifferent. Turk and Ottoman to the backbone, he is convinced

that his soldiers are the best in the world, the most enduring and amenable to discipline.

In speech he is a purist, speaking well, in a slow, monotonous voice; but sometimes the flood of expression is let loose, and he is said to burst into something like eloquence.

If he often perturbs European politics, the mollahs and dervishes find in him a ready listener and a liberal protector. Indeed, he *is* liberal, and takes pleasure in rewarding those who serve him well. His gifts to European ladies are specially magnificent in gems and pearls, of which he has drawers full in the Old Seraglio.

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Born of a Circassian mother, who lost her life in giving him birth, he was brought up in strict Turkish principles by another wife of his father, with no sympathy whatever for the ideas of 'Young Turkey,' introduced by that great statesman Midhat Pasha, and of which party his brother Murad was the leader.

An obscure and solitary childhood made of him a severe and serious man. As Sultan, his very decided opinions soon announced themselves by the exile of Midhat, who, with other reforms, had instituted a Parliament—gagged, indeed, by the despotic action of the Sultan, but still a Parliament.

The necessity imposed on Hamid of signing the Treaty of San Stefano, then that of Berlin—

both so nugatory to Turkey—as depriving the Government of friends, seemed to justify his retrograde policy.

In vain the softas, once so powerful, and the party of 'Young Turkey,' raised their voice for reforms. The Sultan would not listen. *He would reign alone*, and as he pleased. Not even a Grand Vizier was at first appointed, and in this system of isolation he has persevered.

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His reluctance to show himself abroad, and to move from the safe solitude of Yildiz, is a fancy born of the lies of those about him, who find personal advantage in exciting his fears.

With such a sovereign it is deeply to be regretted. Whether these fears proceed from apprehension that the imprisoned Murad—said still to be alive and in safe custody at Dolma-batchke, within the boundary of his park—may be made the excuse for a *pronunciamiento* against him, or whether he is haunted by actual fear of a violent end, such as that of Aziz—who can tell?

Twenty-seven Padishahs have reigned since Mohammed conquered Constantinople in 1453, of whom few have died peacefully. Several have endeavoured to save their lives by resignation, but in Turkish annals that means *death*.

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Meanwhile, the dust of the road and the crowd increasing, I get out at the entrance of a small

pavilion surrounded by windows, where I am received by the most magnificent officer I ever saw. He looks at my card and admits me, bowing to the ground. Then passing other officers, equally magnificent, standing round—for the place seems full of them—I am ushered into a pretty drawing room, hung with chintz, from the windows of which, turned towards the road, we are to see the Sultan pass to the mosque. Nothing can be nicer. No dust, no sun, and tea and coffee served in the politest way. Lots of superb officers are about, rushing to assist. (I discover that there is a smaller and selecter room for the diplomatic corps, for I penetrated into it by mistake, and was turned out.) Party after party come in and take possession of the windows, speculating how they can best see the procession, and chat, generally *sans gêne*, in a high state of expectation.

Now the scene you must picture to yourself is an elegant little white mosque opposite, across the road, with its four minarets and broad gilt iron gateway as the centre; a high hill behind, on which stands the palace of Yildiz, embowered in trees; and the road by which we had come mounting in front to encircle the mosque.

The whole space outside our windows is full of soldiers and attendants, all in dark uniforms and fez—such a thing as a red coat is not to be seen. There are marshals and generals in command of the finest regiments, horsemen in green

and silver, Albanians in embroidered jackets and snow-white fustanella, all wearing the fez, spread about, up and down the road, at every possible point, so that the outlook is as over a sea of scarlet fez. The background is formed by a deep valley and a green hill opposite, with trees, white houses, and gardens, looking miles off, past which, however, in some mysterious manner, we have come by the eccentric road.

It is very picturesque and verdant. The long stretch of road up and down serves well to display the regiments of household troops which are approaching, winding in and out, and appearing in sight long before they arrive in front of the mosque. The finest theatrical effect could not exceed it. There are lancers with flags, guards, artillerymen, sailors, and a kind of Bashi-bazouks, with green turbans—so many regiments I cannot count them. Almost all on horseback—and such horses! The very worst of them is a gem—so sleek and delicately limbed—a cross, I am told, between Hungarian and Arab. Not one moved out of its place as they gently wound up the ascent, troop after troop, and took their stand opposite our pavilion, or above on the line of road which the Sultan was to traverse, or below on a kind of platform.

Little by little every inch of the hillside becomes a closely-packed mass of soldiers. The horses as quiet as lambs, though touching each

other's sides. A kicking horse or one with any trick or blemish would have been an anomaly impossible in such well-mannered animals. I think his fellows would have turned on him and expelled him there and then.

One regiment of grey horses was lovely, all matching in colour, and having that peculiar gentleness of eye only to be found with good treatment.

Next after the troops came a parti-coloured crowd, and a few common Turkish women in veils, but very few.

The whole place was packed with five thousand troops—a perfect marvel of discipline, considering the ground, the soldiers looking much like each other, those on foot eager to dust their shoes before the Sultan came.

At intervals, grand officers came trooping down the hill, in dark uniforms, glittering with plaques and cordons of gold, their breasts one mass of orders. Several names were mentioned, among others the famous Osman Pasha of Plevna, a stern hard-featured man, with a beaked Kurdish nose and deep-set cruel eyes, who kept sedulously apart.

These grand gentlemen gathered principally opposite us near the iron gateway leading into the inclosure of the mosque—the Pasha-General Osman on one side, the Pasha-Admiral on the other.

Of course, these were all pashas of many tails, viziers, ministers, beys, aghas, and high officers of the Selamlik, holding personal service about the

Sultan; all bursting with importance, fat, dark-visaged, and immovable, but not specially Eastern in appearance.

As more and more troops arrived, still marching up the hill, and took their places where they could, the mosque looked at last like a white gem set in a dark frame.

All this time water-carts were clambering up the rise, much to the inconvenience of the troops, and various things were done which apparently had been forgotten until the last moment: attendants with carpets and bags silently hurrying into the mosque in a most undignified manner.

Indeed the silence and the order was very remarkable; not a word was spoken. Both men and horses seemed to know their respective places, and good behaviour was universal.

At a given moment, while a bad orchestra was playing tunes from 'Madame Angot,' under a bank opposite the mosque, two broughams full of veiled ladies, after battling with the water-carts which still lingered on the road, and getting much pushed about, drove into the inclosure, and took up their place under the wall of the mosque. The blinds were drawn down, and the chief eunuch, in a dark cloth coat and fez—a big strapping fellow—quite as puffed out and self-important as the ministers of state, stood at the window in close attendance.

The ladies, the mother and other near relations of the Sultan could have seen but little.

The horses were taken from the carriage, and there the ladies sat boxed up in their broughams listening to the bad music; satisfied, no doubt, for the Turks have no ear, and will listen contentedly to any atrocity.

At this moment, an officer came into our pavilion, and in the politest manner begged the ladies 'not to lean out of the windows, as the Sultan was coming.' At this request, I am afraid a very ill-bred titter made itself heard. In the sight of the Mussulman we are a savage people! Women look at men, and men at women, which is the height of barbarism!

Then, without a sound, an open landau appeared, coming at a foot's pace down the hill from the palace. In it sat the Sultan, the most wretched, pinched-up little sovereign I ever saw. A most unhappy-looking man, of dark complexion, with a look of absolute terror in his large eastern eyes.

People say he is nervous, and no wonder, considering the fate of his predecessors; yet this is to be regretted, for if he could surmount these fears his would be an agreeable and refined countenance, eminently Asiatic in type, and with a certain charm of expression.

All I can say is, that his eyes haunted me for days, as of one gazing at some unknown horror. So emaciated and unnatural is his appearance, that were he a European we should pronounce

him in a swift decline. I hear that his greatest friend and favourite is his physician. And no wonder, for he must need his constant care, considering the life he leads.

How all the fabled state of the Oriental potentate falls before such a lesson in royal misery. The poorest beggar in his dominions is happier than he!

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A mechanical cheer greeted him as he passed the gates of the mosque, but to this he did not respond, maintaining as immovable a visage as an idol carved in wood. A red carpet had been spread on a short marble stair, on which he stepped.

Of course all about was grouped his court, the portly pashas, generals, and officers of state literally swallowing him up. In an instant the Sultan mounted the steps and disappeared into the mosque, and those about him followed.

Half an hour passed while he said his prayers and made his genuflexions, and again we drank tea and coffee. There was a general movement among the soldiers, but so quiet and orderly that they might have been worked by a machine. Then, silently as the breath of a soft wind, each regiment of the five thousand troops severed itself apart, and in rotation entered the gate of the mosque, passing down by the left side, under a range of windows, the band playing all the time. At one of these windows, *we were told*, the Sultan stood to review them. A most

undignified acknowledgment of fear from a successor of the savage Mohammed.

We did not see him, nor did the troops salute, but passed slowly on.

As they filed by they continued to dispose themselves in two lines, one up and one down the precipitous space of road on the steep rise of the hill, and marching onwards, departed in perfect order. It was wonderful. One horse alone reared a little, and then, as if thoroughly ashamed, calmed itself and stepped on with the rest.

Then suddenly an elegant little victoria, perfectly appointed, appears as if by magic at the door of the mosque, much as the enchanted car bears away the good fairy from a feast, and the Sultan, looking very small and very crushed, shows himself on the red carpet at the top of the steps, gets in and, taking the reins (not set with pearls and gems, but ordinary leather reins), drives two faultless grey horses at a walking pace up the ascent, passing by our pavilion, and so disappears.

We did not see his face as he returned, for the hood was up. All his attendants mounted after him, and the two broughams with the harem followed; the orchestra still giving out inharmonious notes of (to them) outlandish opera airs.

All through this ceremony, be it noted, scarcely a native costume was visible among the troops except the green-turbaned Bashi-bazouks and the Albanians I have mentioned, so entirely has

Asiatic pomp been superseded by the quiet aspect of European civilisation.

One reminiscence only remained of the gorgeous procession which was wont for centuries to escort the Sultan to his Friday worship in the city of Stamboul: namely, the six loose horses led by grooms, which followed immediately after the Sultan. Silky and trim, they were a very dream of horses, the sun playing on their soft coats and curling manes; horses as proud of themselves and of their bearing as a belle in a London ball-room, stepping lightly on, and turning their lustrous eyes around, conscious of being the cynosure of the vast crowd.

Such are those which the Oriental loves with a passion far greater than that for wife or child, and they return it with a gentleness and fidelity only to be found in the East. This might be made the text of a long sermon, but I refrain.

How the immense crowd, so jammed together, separated, and how the five thousand horses got away I cannot say; but it was all managed perfectly. Among the mass of carriages I found mine at once, and made my way back to Pera under a burning sun and amidst an amount of dust which no water-cart could subdue. Many of the cavalry galloped with us along the road, and the crowd followed on foot; but all in most perfect order; not a voice was raised, either in sorrow or in joy.

CHAPTER XII

BELISARIUS'S BUCOLION

Massive ruins—Degradation of a notorious general—A group of Byzantine churches.

BESIDES the Palatium—including the Bucolion on the shore and the other palaces—there was what is now called the Palace of Belisarius, built by Constantine and occupied by him when he exchanged Rome for Byzantium, lent afterwards to Belisarius by Justinian, and called by the Turks Takur Serai, 'the palace of the Lord,' indicating that a great Pasha lived there.

It stands high on the utmost hill to which the city rises, near the Adrianople Gate, one of the many entrances on the land side of the more ancient range of walls built by Constantine.

An abstract idea of ruined walls described in cold blood is scarcely interesting, but these have a history of their own in the romantic details of the life of the great general.

If his master, Justinian, lived *sous la pantoufle*, which he undoubtedly did, with the divine Theodora, much more so did Belisarius with the

haughty Antonina, who at times took upon herself to dictate even his military movements.

Nothing in history is more strange than that these two contemporaries, the Emperor and the general, should have fallen violently in love with, and married, two courtesans who had amused the city. Less astonishing indeed in the case of Belisarius, who was but a Thracian peasant, and from a common soldier was drafted into the imperial guard, and when ensnared by her charms probably regarded Antonina (daughter of an actress and of a charioteer of the circus) in the light of one in a superior station to himself.

The fact, however, that both men shared the same sensual taste for beauty established a strong link between them, which again, strange to say, was reciprocated by Theodora and Antonina, themselves fast friends in their youthful degradation as in power.

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The very prominent ruin of the palace of Belisarius is a grand mass of masonry, broken by delicate chisellings and carvings separating ranges of lofty arched windows; a landmark on that high-lying tract in one of the most squalid and degraded parts of Stamboul. Report says Belisarius was imprisoned here when his ungrateful master, whose empire he had so often saved, withdrew his favour. At that time it was known as the Tribunal of the Hebdomon.

In Stamboul, where there is nothing left but stones, and few even of them, to tell the tale of the brilliant city of the Greeks so full of magnificent monuments, this palace assumes immense importance as a representative building which every traveller should study. A sort of museum of art, full of artistic treasures ; but, like all else, devastated by the dreadful Latin Crusaders, who stripped it to the walls before the Turks came bringing fresh ruin in their track. But savage and ruthless as they were, they could not uproot the enormous foundations, or tear down the massive marble columns with richly ornamented capitals which still uphold the Hall of Emperors. Columns, blackened and calcined it is true, but still upright on the first floor, where a line of windows catches the eye. Above is a second row of windows, as lofty but narrower, the space between being carved out in the fashion of the day in delicate ornamental work on belts and cornice, dyed golden by the sun of centuries.

On the façade of the ruin, looking towards the city, there still remain heavy marble stanchions for balconies and galleries jutting out on the hillside, with an outlook over the transcendant view of mountain and water—a tradition of the southern out-of-door climate, where life is passed in the sea-breeze—a buttress or tower in one corner, where the emperors are said to

have presented themselves to the acclamations of the people assembled beneath.

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Now, as I stand in front of this massive ruin, the only specimen here extant of Byzantine architecture, what thoughts come to me of the famous warrior as he was in life! Procopius, his secretary, a perfect Greek Boswell, brings him very near to us. We have only to turn over his pages to behold in our mind's eye the lofty figure of the second Africanus, robed in his white mantle, passing in and out of these portals, realising every quality expected of a hero, greeting with gracious smiles the meanest of the Byzantines assembled in portico or street to do him honour—followed by his guards (each of whom had overcome a barbarian in battle), adored by his army and worshipped by the citizens, to whom each word and smile was as a treasure.

A perfectly human man this conqueror of Africa and the Goths, and that is what endears him to posterity, — daring without rashness, and prudent without fear, to which, be it added, loving to utter weakness.

Would that we could trace the fashion of the halls in which he lived, the portals by which he entered, the galleries where he feasted with Antonina, when, mimicking the luxury of her mistress, she gave banquets to her lovers.

The blot upon Belisarius is that he knew her

vices and still loved her—an excess of conjugal complaisance even in that dissolute age considered as in the highest degree ignominious.

Such is the teaching of centuries; and when the conqueror of the Persians returned to Constantinople, and criminated by the hate of Theodora, not without suspicions that Antonina had instigated the Empress against him, was received with silence and contempt by the imperial pair whose throne he had defended, and mobbed by the servile citizens who had hung upon his word—he ascended alone with faltering steps the long ascent to his deserted home, beggared of all save the honour of a victorious general who had saved his country—in despair he cast himself upon his bed and wept.

Then came the culminating act of baseness. Roused from his bitter reflections as he lay alone on his bed, or rather divan—for bed is a modern word by no means fitted to Eastern habits—Belisarius beheld an imperial chamberlain enter with all the pompous pageant proper to convey to mortals a message from the divine Theodora.

Expecting a mandate of instant death, the axe or poison, Belisarius rose, and with befitting genuflexion unbound the royal scroll.

'You are aware how much you have deserved my displeasure,' said the imperial mandate, 'but I am not insensible to the services of Antonina. To her intercession I grant your life.

The staggered husband read the words which conveyed to him no sense. When or how had he been wanting to Antonina? Was not his life regulated by her pleasure? But as the golden-footed messenger turned to leave, another quickly followed. Antonina had forgiven him; she would consent to receive him!

Forgetting all else in a transport of love he sought her out and, prostrate before her, kissed the ground at her feet, uttering such rhapsodies of love all the while that at last she raised him and condescended to embrace him.

Where this memorable scene of woman's subjugation of a hero took place I should like to know, but neither book nor guide can enlighten me. The hollow walls, staring out with viewless windows, look down and tell no tale.

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The ancient Byzantine church, now the mosque Kahriëh Jamisi, which is near Takur Serai, should be visited for the sake of its fourteenth century mosaic and frescoes, now in great part veiled, alas, with a remorseless coating of yellow lime; the form and details of the church, with its outer and inner narthex, and wide naves, or rather corridors, are very interesting. The central portion or church, now a mosque, curiously small in contrast to its surroundings, is lined with marble. Fortunately, it is precisely in these outer portions, which are not devoted to Moslem wor-

ship, that the remarkable frescoes and mosaic are left uncovered, with a life and action about the figures very unusual in this conventional school.

The convent and church were founded by Justinian (527–565) originally outside the walls, and were rebuilt by Maria Ducas, mother-in-law of Alexius Comnenus.

Not far distant, and to be visited at the same time, following on near the walls and the gate of Haivan Serai Kapusi, is the mosque of Atik Mustafa Pasha, originally the church of the Apostles Peter and Mark—with an eight-sided circular cupola and rectangular walls.

Close by is another Byzantine church, that of the Holy Thekla, now a mosque—Toklu Dede Medschide—honoured by the Turks—and the burial place of Abu Scheibet el Chadri, a 'brave,' who was killed at the siege of Constantinople.

And so from the palace of Belisarius, through the Haivan Serai, a few steps onwards take you to the Hagiasma or sacred church of the Blachernæ, and to the gardens and cypresses of Eyoub.

CHAPTER XIII

MOSQUES

Museum of Ancient Costumes—Mosques—Extremes meet in ritual—The pigeons of Bajazet II—The Suleimanyekh—Suleiman the Magnificent—The mosque of Mohammed II—An eastern Harry of Monmouth—A tomb of many Sultans—The Sweet Waters of Europe—The ceremony of sabreing—Abdul Hamid's first function.

I HAVE now seen a good deal of Stamboul and find little to admire. There is a raw unfinished air about everything—neither characteristic of the east nor of the west—to be in part attributed to the ravages of constant fires. The city is a jumble of huge unexpected places left bare, isolated houses, or rather villas with gardens, in the centre of the city, blocks of dirty narrow streets with gutter in the middle, and lordly mosques. Of any attempt at symmetry there is none. Everything is indescribably dusty, as with the accumulation of ages, and as the city rises on the sides of a steep acclivity, the intersecting and squalid alleys—for I cannot call them streets—are as confusing as puzzles.

I shall never forget the approach to the great

Bazaar—the flaunting little shops, like boxes on end, protruding on either side, the filthy loose pavement, and the steep sides which sent one of our wheels more or less in air—and this in the most frequented part of Stamboul.

Just at the extremity of the Hippodrome, with its usual complement of led horses, beggars, and tourists, Spiro conducted me through a little court and damp passage up some rickety stairs, to what is pompously called the Museum of Ancient Costumes: a collection of grotesque wooden dolls as large as life, in the style of Mrs. Jarley's waxworks, with glaring cheeks, protruding eyes, and blackest of wigs, representing all the officers of the court, the trades and professions of the capital.

Here I was introduced to the chief eunuch, the grand vizier, mufti, dervishes, and aghas, half-hidden in the most voluminous turbans of every shape and colour, caftans of embroidered silk, and brocaded tunics, white, red, and yellow, encircled with scarves and vests, one glittering mass of gold, but all tawdry and moth-eaten.

Next to the dignitaries who surround the Padishah come the pages, who wait on his person (for there are many corridors filled with these hideous dolls), the bostandjis (gardeners), and guards of the Seraglio, and the black and white eunuchs, grinning horribly through rows of false teeth, wearing broad Persian hats and turbans

shaped like crescents, carrying iron whips, and armed with daggers covered with gilt plaques which rattle as I pass.

The whole corps of the janissaries is represented at length ; aghas, officers, soldiers, even to representation of the murderous kettles—so often the symbols of revolt and massacre—marked on their caps along with the number of the regiment ; the cooks who presided over the kettles, carriers, soup makers, with spoons in their turbans, and water carriers ; also the dreadful mutes bearing the fine silken skein which ended life so deftly, and dwarfs and buffoons, with faces and shapes deformed to hideousness.

And now scarcely a single national costume is to be seen in the streets, so completely have the Ottomans adopted European fashions.

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From the museum I passed to the mosques, the monarchs of that grand architectural procession which crowns the heights of Stamboul, and lends such an individuality to the view.

Seen from a distance, the effect of the domes and minarets standing out on the sky-line is magnificent, but on near inspection a mosque is essentially monotonous, and all are more or less clumsy parodies of St. Sophia. Always square, always with domes—a large one in the centre, and a conglomeration of smaller ones and half-domes at the corners.

After the conquest of Constantinople, all the principal churches were at once converted into mosques by Mohammed II., and this metamorphosis continued up to the time of Selim I., his grandson. There are twenty such in Stamboul, known as Klisse Jamy (church mosques).

The principal buildings, which number two hundred and twenty-seven, are called *jamy*—place of meeting; the smaller ones, six hundred and sixty-four in number, *mesjid*—beggars' houses—from which are derived the words *mesquita* as at Cordova, and the French *mosquée*.

The mosques erected by the sultans have the first place in the category. They are all large and imposing, with *haremlik* or forecourt shut in by walls and gates, and planted with trees, covered fountains for ablution, mausoleums, and turbehs, schools for students, kitchens for the poor, baths, lodgings, and libraries—for Moslem life, in a crowd of mean buildings, clusters round its sanctuaries, to the great injury of their architectural outline.

Within, all is open, empty, and glaring from innumerable windows in every direction; the image, as the Turks affirm, of a faith emanating direct from God, without interposition of any priesthood.

Each has a pulpit of marble reached by a high stair, a tribune for the Sultan with a gilt grille, and a holy place where the Koran is kept, placed near a railed-off space where the muezzin

calls to prayer and the Koran is read. As to the reading of the Koran, I have seldom entered a mosque without seeing a venerable figure in turban and caftan seated cross-legged on a carpet within an enclosure, reading aloud from a large book, no one apparently paying the smallest attention whatever.

As the mosques are always open at night during the feast of Bairam, there are enormous iron hoops of candelabra hanging low down under the dome, furnished with innumerable small glass burners like night lights. The hoops are such as are used for a public hall, only that no hall would be lighted so miserably, and are decorated with roc's eggs, horses' tails, and coloured tassels suspended by cords, like toys to amuse children. The eye is also attracted by the hideous coloured discs given by various sultans, which are fixed on the angles of the domes, as at St. Sophia, with sprawling Turkish letters running round, and by the name of God and texts of the Koran encircling arches, entrances, pillars, and empty spaces.

It appears that the name of God and sentences from the Koran cannot be too often repeated in the large straggling caligraphy of the Turk. On the walls of the larger mosques and in the dado of gaudy Persian faïence they are largely introduced, with an effect far from pleasing.

Instead of steeples the Turks have minarets, from which the faithful are called to prayer five

times a day; the number of these ordinarily is four, but in the mosque of Ahmed it is increased to six, conveying a corresponding idea of importance to the native mind.

The Turk holds that the mosque is for prayer, reading, and preaching. No ceremony takes place here, but in summer professors of theology (*muderris*) give their lectures under the cool walls to numbers of students (*softas*), who make their appearance in turban and caftan, and squat on the floor to take their notes.

It is singular that the *turbedan* (caretakers) of the *turbehs* of the sultans—within which wooden catafalques are placed, covered with rich palls generally of priceless Persian shawls, and candles and lighted lamps—are enjoined to read the Koran every morning, and, like Roman Catholics, to recite prayers for the repose of the souls of the dead; a curious convergence of opposite extremes.

If a sultan, as is often the case, has transcribed the Koran with his own hand, the manuscript is carefully preserved in his *turbeh* on a stand of ebony, inlaid with mother-of-pearl.

During the seven holy nights of Islam, and the fast of Ramazan, the Turks visit the tombs assiduously and place flowers there—another point of contact with the Catholic faith. Probably all these rites are borrowed insensibly from the Greeks, for what could the Kurd or Turcoman know of them in his native plains?

I have already mentioned the Mosque of Ahmed, built on the site of the Palatium by Ahmed III., that decorator of the capital, as Court mosque, so to say, where the sultans keep the festival of Bairam. In a garden adjoining the great Sultan sleeps in his *turbeh*; the catafalque above is covered with precious shawls, his turban glitters with diamonds, and at his feet burn two torches of wax; around are some thirty boxes, for I cannot call them tombs, of various dimensions, belonging to his favourite wives and his children, beside him in death as they were in life.

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About the Mosque of Bajazet II.—that dreamy son of a ferocious father, situated on the ground looking over Stamboul, close to the plateau where stand the palace of the Seraskier (War Minister) and the high white tower—there dwells a perennial charm.

You enter, by a lofty door in the Persian style, a picturesque court, darkened by cypresses and plane-trees. Scattered about are small tables and stalls, placed under a cloister which runs round the court, where all sorts of oriental goods are displayed by dark-faced figures, made gloomy by the shadows.

Worshippers come and go out of the mosque through deeply arched portals, passing silently across the pavement into the dazzling outer sunshine on the bare space of the parade-ground

before the Seraskierate, while myriads of grey-feathered pigeons come fluttering down from roof and pinnacle to settle at your feet. These pigeons instinctively know a stranger, whose duty it is to bestow a few coins on the keeper of the birds (immovable in a dark caftan under the pillars), who at once scatters around corn, which the gentle birds fearlessly pick up.

To the pigeons, man comes as a friend, specially the traveller, and the loving confidence they show is very touching. The dogs, too, are not forgotten, for there is a distribution of bread to them on Friday. Whether these pigeons are the descendants of the historic pair bought by Bajazet of a poor woman and presented to the mosque, who can say? The story lends them a charm, and sets one thinking of the strange history of Bajazet, the brother of the too interesting Yizim (Djein) whom his jealousy sent forth a wanderer over Europe, until he was laid at rest at Rome by the poison of the Borgias.

Here is an anecdote of this same bird-loving Bajazet, who could be as sarcastic and cruel as his father, when, in the orgies of a drunken frolic in the Seraglio, where the wines of Cyprus and Shiraz flowed freely among the viziers and the pashas, he insulted his old friend Keduk Ahmed, one of his father's best generals and at the time agha of the janissaries.

'Look you now, O Keduk,' said the Sultan,

the portals of whose lips copious draughts of wine had opened, 'I am a man of peace; my father was a man of war. I want no greedy and vain-glorious pashas, nor their janissaries either, eating up the taxes in their pride.'

To which Keduk hastily responded: 'And who, O Sultan, placed you on the throne? Who keeps you there? Are you so safe that you can despise the janissaries, who can pull you down as soon as they have put you up?'

A silence of death followed the bold speech. Bajazet, crimson with rage, beckoned to the Kislar Agha, and when all were departing and the robes of honour were being distributed, that offered to Keduk was black as night. Keduk at once rose and prepared to die. But the voice of Bajazet made itself heard once more.

'Stay!' cried he; 'stay! I have not done with you,' as the mutes advanced to strip and beat him before the bowstring was tightened round his neck.

'Base and ungrateful wretch!' cried the Vizier, who had now nothing to lose; 'if you had condemned me to die, why did you defile my soul in making me drink wine?'

But the sequel of this story and the punishment of Bajazet will be told in the chapter on the Seraglio, on the spot where it occurred.

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And here I will again note, though I have

done so before, how exceedingly near to each other are all these places of interest. The Old Seraglio below, St. Sophia above, the Atmeidan (Hippodrome), the three or four principal mosques, the balustraded terrace before the Seraskierate, and the great bazaar, are but a stone's throw from each other.

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Not far off rise the gilded dome and the four wreathed minarets of the Suleimanyekh, of which the Turks are justly proud. It is by far the most artistic among the mosques which crown the hills.

Built by Sinan for Suleiman the Great—or, as he styled himself, 'Shah-Sultan, Suleiman Khan, ever-victorious Sultan, by the abundant blessings of the Sun of the heavens of prophecy, the Star of the Constellation of the Patriarch, Pontiff of the phalanx of Prophets, chosen of the Legion of the Saints of Mohammed the Pure, upon whom the benediction of God rests'—it was inaugurated in 1556 after five years of labour. It is entered by a large court surrounded by a high and dignified arcade, the unpaved ground being shaded by cypresses and weather-beaten planes which lend a certain grandeur to the square white mass (225 feet by 205 feet) which rises before me, surmounted by a dome seventeen metres higher than that of St. Sophia.

Within, the close imitation of the Basilica is

apparent, carried out, however, with a certain purity and beauty. The four monolithic columns which support the screen beneath the lateral arches of the dome (on one of which is said to have stood the statue of Justinian, on another that of Venus), are light and elegant, and, like the double gallery which runs round, show a touch of classic art.

The sun streams through coloured glass windows, lighting up what seems a parterre of gay flowers, and the bright azure of the Persian tiles on the walls, said to have been brought by Suleiman from Persia as spoil, is brilliant and effective. The arrangements of pulpit, *mihrab*, and candelabra are always the same, and texts from the Koran serve as ornaments as elsewhere. There is a monotony about it all which is absolutely depressing. For, as no stranger is admitted while public prayers are going on, the mosque appears always gaunt, empty, and cold as you flounder about in slippers on the matted floor, and gaze at the few strange turbaned figures immovable before the *mihrab*; nor are the manners of the door-keepers calculated to raise your spirits; a look of hatred is in their eyes, defiance and suspicion in every movement.

Outside, at the entrance, there is the usual crowd of filthy beggars (dirt here constituting godliness), horses for hire, sellers of sweetmeats, sherbet, and chaplets for prayers, for your true

Turk has beads like a Roman Catholic—all on trays carried on the head; to which add groups of yellow-haired dogs stretched in the sun, near the water-pipes of the fountain.

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It is not possible to visit this mosque without having one's mind filled with the memory of Suleiman the Magnificent, the grandest Turk and greatest sultan that ever lived.

Tenth in succession of the race of Othman, contemporary of Charles V., Francis I., Leo X., Henry VIII., and in a sense mightier than all, he was called 'The Perfector of the Perfect Number.'

Suleiman was no common man; in all he did the soul of a hero was apparent; yet, cultivated as perhaps no other caliph ever was; capable of tenderness and friendship; soothed and charmed by poetry and music in the company of the famous flute-player his favourite Ibrahim, and himself a poet well esteemed; the architect of the grand buildings with which he adorned Constantinople; possessing legal knowledge in virtue of which he might have been compared to Justinian; not to speak of his princely courage and military genius—his nature, profoundly savage, retained the cruel taint of the Kurd.

Ibrahim was his first victim, sacrificed to his suspicions, in one of those domestic tragedies peculiar to Turkey. Then his eldest son, Mustafa, a gallant young prince, fighting with the army in

the Persian war, proceeding gaily, amid the acclamations of the troops, to obey his father's summons, and meet him within his tent, near Broussa, to find, *not* the Sultan, whom he expected, but the seven fatal mutes armed with the bowstring.

In an instant they are upon him, the cord fixed round his throat, and while he struggles and shouts for help, Suleiman, listening from within, sends other slaves to finish the dismal work.

'It is the command of the Sultan you should die,' says the slave.

'His order is the will of God,' is the reply, and forthwith Mustafa himself adjusts the fatal cord.

The murder of another son, Bajazet, followed. A fugitive in Persia, he was brought home and strangled.

Mustafa and Bajazet both sacrificed to make way for Selim, son of Roxalana.

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Now the name of Roxalana comes like a solitary note of love in a night of darkness; a spell binding the terrible Suleiman in bonds tighter than steel.

Directly, too, does it bear on the subject of his mosques, for beside the great temple, and under the shadow of the pillared cupola which forms the mausoleum of Suleiman himself, where under fluted columns, costly shawls, rich embroideries, and mother-of-pearl and ebony carvings, he lies with two other sultans, a separate dome,

embowered in trees, is the burial-place of Roxalana. She is said to have been an Italian captured by pirates on the Tuscan coast, and is still remembered there by a tower, called 'La Torre di Roxalana.'

Her name, La Rossa, gives her complexion and the colour of her auburn hair crossed with gold, so loved by Titian, to be found alike in Venice and in mountain-bound Siena. It was her soft voice that breathed into the Sultan's ears suspicions of his sons, and as Suleiman advanced in years these poisonous whisperings grew more and more effective, until the catastrophe was reached.

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The mosque of Mohammed II., further north, still on the sky-line of the fourth of the seven hills on which the city rises, occupies the site of the ancient church of the Holy Apostles, once the burying-place of the Greek Emperors.

None other would suit the ambitious taste of the Conqueror.

Here the bodies of the emperors had been placed in huge coffins of porphyry, granite, serpentine, and precious marbles, brought from Thessaly and Paros.

During the Latin invasion these sarcophagi were opened, and after seven hundred years the body of Justinian was exposed and robbed of the jewels which he wore in death; so that the Turks are not the only delinquents.

However, the Latins spared the Basilica, a most ancient and curious structure, which Mohammed bodily pulled down in order to make way for a nondescript edifice—partly Italian, partly Eastern—bald and bare inside; elevated on a high terrace, and covered with a thick coating of grey cement.

To the right of the great gate, I came on a lapis lazuli tablet, engraven with words from the Koran said to be prophetic of the city's doom. 'They (the Turks) will capture Constantinople, and happy the prince, and happy the army which accomplishes this.' Outside is the burial-place of the Conqueror, who lies alone, his family being arranged in adjoining *turbehs*. Around are eight schools founded by him, a home for students (*softas*), a poor-house, a hospital, caravanserai, and bath.

It is said that Mohammed, furious with the architect Christodoulos for having built the walls of his mosque lower than those of St. Sophia, and actually having sawn off and shortened two of the most beautiful columns to suit his measure, ordered that his hands should be cut off. Christodoulos, surrounded by his wailing friends, at once applied for damages before the cadi or judge. At his demand the Sultan was summoned also, and he, to show in what respect he held the law, arrived, securely armed with a battle-axe in his girdle. When about to seat himself, the cadi bade him rise, the parties to a suit being bound to

maintain their cause standing. After much pleading to the intent that the cutting of marble was not the same matter as amputation of flesh and blood, and that in consequence the architect, being now unfit for employment, must be maintained at the charge of the Sultan, unless he (Mohammed) preferred his own wrists to be operated upon, an agreement was come to that the architect should receive as a compensation twenty-eight aspres a day.

This being settled, the judge proceeded to pay the Sultan the honour due to his rank, excusing himself for his disrespect as long as the case was before him for judgment.

'And you have done well,' answered Mohammed, 'for by Allah, had you given the verdict against the architect, I should have slain you with this axe,' producing the redoubtable weapon from his girdle. To which the judge replied, bowing himself to the earth:—

'My all gracious Lord has also done well, for had he not submitted to the sentence I pronounced, I too had summoned a servant to my aid;' and he raised the carpet on which he sat cross-legged, and behold, out darted a venomous snake; but, soothed by the judge, it crept back. Thereupon the Sultan, paid in his own coin, kissed the judge's hand, and retired to the Seraglio, much impressed with his virtue as a maintainer of the law.

Near St. Sophia, within one of the many gates turned south, the little mosque of Selim, the Selimije, built by Suleiman in memory of his father Selim, deserves a word for its fine marble columns, and graceful aspect.

Selim II. (known as Selim the Sot, the son of Roxalana) is remembered in history by the great naval defeat of the Turks in the battle of Lepanto, by Don Juan of Austria, son of Philip II.

Here he lies, beside one of the so-called *wives* of his son Amurath III., Nour Banou (Lady of Light), a valideh known as having pandered to the sensual tastes of Amurath, buying up the slave markets of Asia for his use.

Near the *turbeh* of Selim is seen an obscure burying-place of most desolate and tumble-down aspect, where lie at rest the *nineteen brothers* of Mohammed III., sons of his father this same Amurath III., murdered, as some say, by order of his mother, the vindictive Nour Banou, before his arrival from Asia Minor; or, as others say, by his own order. At all events they were sacrificed to the Cain-like spirit of the Ottoman dynasty.

The mosque of the Valideh Sultana Terkhan, which I have already mentioned, stands in the centre of the turmoil of the city, close to the bridge of Galata, the noisiest spot in all Constantinople.

Terkhan, like Roxalana, was a woman of

power, who ruled not only over her own sultan, but her sons and grandson, successively sultans.

Beside her in this grave lie the bodies of Mohammed IV. her son, Mustafa II. her grandson, Ahmed III., Mahmoud I., the great calligrapher, whose copy of the Koran is preserved here, and Osman III., whose reign was so brief that it is scarcely remembered. Each catafalque is railed in with balustrades of ebony and mother-of-pearl, and enveloped in costly shawls, with lustres and roc's eggs and tassels pendent above.

The mosque of Abdul Hamid, near the Seraglio, brings us to comparatively modern times (1789). Nor would I note it, but for the fact that here, beside his father, reposes the strangled son Mustafa IV., infamous to all time as the instrument of the janissaries in the foul murder of that pure-minded and philosophic reformer Selim III.

The miserable Mustafa, for nineteen years shut up in what is called 'the Cage' of the harem, had been to Selim as a son; but when chosen by the rebellious janissaries to usurp the throne, instead of showing gratitude, at once commanded his benefactor's death, as well as that of his own brother, Mahmoud.

That Mustafa should pay the penalty of his treason with his life was but just, and no place was obscure enough for his tomb but this corner.

Another note is struck, of triumph and revenge,

before the splendid mausoleum of the same Mahmoud, known as 'the Reformer,' close upon St. Sophia and the Hippodrome, who succeeded Selim III. and the wretched Mustafa.

The wise and able ruler who lies enshrined within this brilliant tomb, the sunlight falling on his diamond aigrette and plume, surrounded with all the mortuary tinsel so loved by the Turks, was not content with any common act of punishment on those who had compassed the murder of his friend and relative Selim, but by a deeply concerted plan, which took him eighteen years to compass, cut the evil at the root by the destruction of the janissaries.

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Far from the noise and tumult of the city, at the base of a green hillside at the very extremity of the Golden Horn, where it rounds off into the verdant valley of the Sweet Waters of Europe, lies the mosque of Eyoub, in a village of the same name. You reach it in a caïque, or by one of those many steamers that so constantly pass, stopping at all the stairs of the many piers on either hand of the harbour.

This most picturesque suburb, situated beyond the walls of Stamboul, surrounded by woods and gardens and darkened by groves of cypress, takes its name from Eyoub or Jacob, the friend and standard-bearer of the Prophet, who was killed by the Arabs in the year 668, at the first

siege of Constantinople. His place of burial is alleged to have been revealed miraculously to Mohammed the Conqueror, who forthwith erected the mosque and therein placed his victorious scimitar.

Now the personality of Eyoub may be a myth, but the being 'sabred,' or invested with the sabre, is tantamount to coronation in Western lands, and must positively precede the reception of ambassadors of foreign powers. Indeed, a sultan is not a sultan until he is 'sabred.'

It is certain that the plateau on which this white mosque stands—veiled by its dark screen of trees and sweet with the perfume of flowers—was the parade ground of the Greeks, where the emperors reviewed the Varangian guards and their troops after the imperial residence was moved from the Palatium to the Blachernæ. Here too each new Basileus was presented to the army and proclaimed Imperator.

In imitation of this—for the Turks, though full of contempt for the Christians, constantly adopt their customs—the consecration of a sultan takes place here in the most solemn form and in the presence of Mussulmans only. Should any foreigner be discovered, he would pay the forfeit with his life.

The mosque itself is, so I am told, exactly like others. Large it cannot be, from its appearance outside, but the *turbehs* and mausoleums grouped

around are held in high veneration, and noted for their gaudy decorations.

Here lie Gulman Sultana, the mother of the ill-fated Selim III., and her two daughters, and the usual complement of Turkish princes and pensioners.

The touching record of the two children of Adeli Sultana, sister of the late Abdul Aziz, who were murdered as infants and buried here, is never to be forgotten.

Adeli, dreading the fate that awaited her baby-sons, never let them out of her sight; but a narcotic was secretly given her, and on awaking she finds them gone! The heart-broken mother lived but a few weeks, but she still speaks to us from the sumptuously decorated little biers, surmounted with two tiny fezs, in these touching epitaphs: 'A flower that had scarcely bloomed, prematurely torn from its stem.' 'Here lies one removed to those bowers where roses never fade, for a mother's tears moisten them. Say a *fatche* for its beatitude.' And this barbarity happened in a modern reign, only a few years ago!

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And now as to the ceremony of sabreing as it took place in 1774, before modern ideas had penetrated among the Turks.

The Grand Vizier and the chief mufti open the *cortège* on horseback. Behind, thirty-two horses were led, richly caparisoned, twelve carry-

ing shields set with precious stones. The Sultan, a blaze of diamonds, follows, surrounded by his guards, with dazzling casques; at his right stirrup walks the master of the horse, at his left the grand chamberlain, the second aide-de-camp holding the right rein, the guardian of the sacred standard of the Prophet the left; and around and close upon him are the nine dignitaries called 'of the stirrup,' the chief huntsman, cup-bearer, and others.

The moment the Sultan dismounts, the nine lords or pashas 'of the stirrup' retire, and make way for the lords or pashas of the 'shoulder.'

Those who actually touch his sacred person are the agha of the janissaries, who assists him to dismount; the Grand Vizier and the Kislar Agha, or chief eunuch, who support him under the arms.

Behind the Sultan are carried, on richly embroidered cushions, two turbans, symbols of his dominion over two worlds.

In order to avoid the fatigue of saluting the multitude, the two pages who carry the turbans incline them constantly to right and left. Two others bear the stool which is to receive the foot of the brother of the sun, as he dismounts, and the silver spoon for his ablutions in the mosque.

The chief almoner meanwhile flings money to the crowd (a custom imitated from the Greek

emperors), two rows of janissaries being drawn up on either side. These mutinous troops the Sultan himself took care to salute (not by deputy, with the turbans on the cushions, but by moving his own imperial head), the janissaries returning his salute with the face turned to the left, as indicating that, at a sign from the Padishah, they were ready to lay their heads on the block.

Further, to mark the favour in which they are held, the procession stops at each of the various barracks on the way, for the Sultan to receive a cup of sherbet, the cup being returned filled with gold coins.

Now mark the difference.

When the present Sultan Hamid was 'sabred,' he arrived at the pier in a crimson-lined caïque, under a gaily fluttering canopy of gold, rowed by twelve stalwart Albanians in attire as white as snow; a plain fez, without aigrette or ornament of any kind, covered his head, and a heavy cloth mantle concealed his orders and uniform.

Though younger by several years than when I first saw him, there was the same heavy inscrutable face—regular-featured, indeed, but devoid of any human expression of pleasure or of pain. The countenance of a man with an unquestioning will, obstinate in himself, but with little observation or intelligence to justify this defect. Stolidly he rode on, mounted on a beautiful white charger, which seemed to understand the honour

of its position; his long thin fingers nervously caressing his beardless chin (significant of the Sultan's terror of assassination, which I have already mentioned), with no apparent consciousness or acknowledgment of the ringing cheers which greeted him on all sides from the closely ranked soldiers, and the occupants of the stands and tents erected along the road. Doubtless he knew, as all did, that they were mere *claqueurs*, placed there for the occasion.

Pashas, ministers, beys, secretaries—all in military uniform, with much gold lace, and glittering orders of the Lion and Medjidié, buttoned close up to the chin—preceded him, two and two, on horses splendidly caparisoned.

Mounted zaptiehs, companies of ulemas, grey, green, and blue, specially conspicuous in their flowing robes, large sleeves, and bands of gold across full turbans, followed. Then came the Sheikh-ul-Islam, all in white, a most picturesque figure, riding remarkably well; dignitaries of the Greek Church; squadrons of horse and halberdiers, and, in the rear, many close carriages, containing Turkish ladies.

Thus Abdul Hamid rode onwards on the land side, stopping *en passant* at the tomb of his father, Abdul Medjid, in the Mosque of Mohammed II.

And with this sketch I leave the subject of the mosques—as uninteresting, I fear, in description as they are in reality.

CHAPTER XIV

THE OLD SERAGLIO

Seraglio Point—Signification of Seraglio—Fairy-like water-palace—Ortu Kapu, the place of execution—Eccentricities of Turkish cuisine—A motley crowd—The Hall of the Divan—A promising beginning—A brief but fatal delay—Insolent tyranny of the Spahis—Vast halls of marble—The harem—A ceremonial writing lesson—A murderous intention averted—Inmates of the harem.

THE Point of the Seraglio, with its mass of dark cypresses and small domes, white as snow, upon the hill, seems to follow you everywhere—the first object which you see on entering the city, and the last on which your eye rests in departing.

By the Point of the Seraglio have sailed vessels of every nation of the world: triremes from Asia carrying the Persian Chagan; the gilded fleets of Genoa and Venice bearing the Crusaders, and resplendent caïques of sultans approaching to mount an unenviable throne, or seeking refuge from a miserable death.

What glories have these waters seen! what myriads of corpses have they covered! But a stone's throw between them, Europe and Asia appear to join; the Sea of Marmora, wide and

low-banked, swells towards Greece on one side, on the other the Bosphorus with its blooming shores leads by watery highways to the Black Sea.

What contrasts!

At the Point of the Seraglio the surface of these several waters joins, and the Golden Horn, or harbour, begins.

On the opposite shore, at Galata and Tophane, crowded with buildings to the sky, there is no point, but the banks narrow to form the commencement of the harbour. Then comes the bridge of Galata, which joins both shores.

All this land and water (for the sea-way is as much the highway of Constantinople as the street) may be called the centre and heart of the great capital, and such it has been since the days of Constantine.

The vast gardens of the Seraglio, forming the nucleus of the Acropolis of the original city—Top-kapu Serai of the Turks—was the site of the Palatium Sacrum of Constantine, the baths of Arcadius, the palace of Placidia, Queen of the Goths and daughter of Theodosius, the Augusteum, and the palace of Mangana.

I did not find the rapid current of water rushing past the point turquoise blue, nor did the heavens assume that sapphire tint attributed to them by enthusiastic travellers. But the darkness of the cypress woods and the whiteness of the delicate white domes massed into a little town of

separate kiosks, crumpled up in an Oriental way, and backed by the gate of Bab-i-Houmayoun and the tall mediæval walls enclosing the Seraglio, is very striking.

When I say that in August 1863 the greater portion of the Seraglio was destroyed by fire, that the Orient railway by which you arrive pierces the venerable walls and narrows the famous gardens, and that rows of wooden sheds resounding to the hammers of shipbuilders line the once poetic shore where favourite sultanas struck the cords of zithers, or breathed through soft flutes to sultans holding high revels in the Kiosk of Pearls—the disenchantment is complete!

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I entered the gardens of the Seraglio in a *fiacre*, by the side gate in the walls which opens from the tramway on the hill of the Street of the Divan.

A more scrubby desolation I have rarely seen: like a Turkish cemetery, minus the headless tombstones, dogs, and beggars! The gently rising hills are denuded of their ancient trees, the grass is yellow and dingy, everywhere a look of neglect, not pathetic but squalid. Ugly buildings of no special distinction, a college and an institution of fine arts, both appearing abandoned—thrust themselves forward. All is hideous save the lovely Oriental kiosk, Tschinili, built by the conqueror Mohammed, and restored by Murad III., on the lower part of the grounds

under the hill, imitated from one at Bagdad, with a graceful pillared portico, halls domed with gilt coruscations, and lined with blue Persian tiles, inlaid doors of bronze and mother-of-pearl opening from hall to hall. A steep and extremely bad road, only accessible to the excellent little thickset horses, winds up the ascent under the cypresses to the outer Court of the Janissaries —also extremely desolate and weed-grown; for it must be understood that since the last fire in 1863, the greater part of the palace has disappeared, rendering still more apocryphal the gorgeous descriptions given of it by Amicis and other travellers determined to be deceived.

I must here note that the Seraglio is quite a generic name common to all Turkish houses, with no *arrière-pensée* of mysterious seclusion, and is quite distinct and different from the *harem* proper. The Seraglio or Selamlik forms the outer portion of any habitation, whether palace, kiosk, or konak, the entrance and public apartments of which are reserved for the men.

The harem for the women is separate, and is invariably the most decorated and best finished portion of the home, be it great or small; and before all the windows are carved wooden shutters, so that those within may see without being themselves visible.

From the time of Mohammed II., who appropriated part of the Palatium to form the gardens,

to Abdul Medjid in 1864, who left it for the more cheerful palace of Dolmabatchke on the Bosphorus, twenty-five sultans have been imprisoned, or murdered, or have died within these walls, according as fate and the caprice of the all-powerful janissaries willed.

But, like the Greek emperors of old, who found the ancient magnificence of the Palatium too near the popular assemblies of the Hippodrome, the sultans at last came to realise the danger of so close a contact with the city, and after the massacre of the janissaries, who would never have allowed them to remove out of their reach, were glad to accept the comparative quiet and safety of the palaces on the shores of the Bosphorus.

The great gate of the Seraglio, Bab-i-Houmayoun, cutting the line of crenellated walls, stands a little under the platform on which rise the clustered domes of St. Sophia and what remains of the Atmeidan (Hippodrome).

This is the Sublime Porte, a modern-looking arch of no special beauty, with the Arabic inscription running round: 'May Allah ever preserve the glory of the possessor: may Allah strengthen his foundation.'

Within two niches on either side the heads of those who had been executed during the night were exposed. Sometimes these heads were simply nailed up within the niches, sometimes

placed, like John the Baptist's, in a silver charger; or, as a special mark of vengeance, the head was placed with the body, between the feet; but in all cases the accusation and the sentence were invariably affixed, so that the justice of the Sultan might be evident to all.

Even up to the beginning of the *present century*, the heads of the whole divan of ministers under the unfortunate Selim III. were treated in this fashion, the janissaries falling on them like wild beasts, and carrying them off to the Atmeidan barracks above, to range these bloody trophies before the historic kettles, which always take so prominent a place in their revolts.

The gate was always guarded by a strong force of janissaries and bostandjis, a domestic guard formed of the gardeners of the Seraglio, whose special duty it was to guard the person of the Sultan, each Mussulman in passing being enjoined to repeat a prayer for the Commander of the Faithful.

Outside, on a platform, where a priceless view bursts on one with that magnificence of land and water which, often as it is seen, makes one's pulse beat with joy, a brilliant Arab kiosk, all gold and arabesque, attracts the eye. This is the fountain of Ahmed III., a wonderful sultan, so engrossed in war one wonders he had time to embellish Constantinople with its noblest modern monuments, and to leave

records of *fêtes*, processions and ceremonies quite unparalleled in the dulness of other reigns.

I stand enchanted before this fairy-like water palace, with the deep-eaved pagoda roof lined with delicate pencillings of gold, the long patterns cut in panels on the sides, stalactites in niches, entwinings of Turkish verses and colonnettes, and delicately carved roses and stars, all in dead gold, softened by time into a lovely tint.

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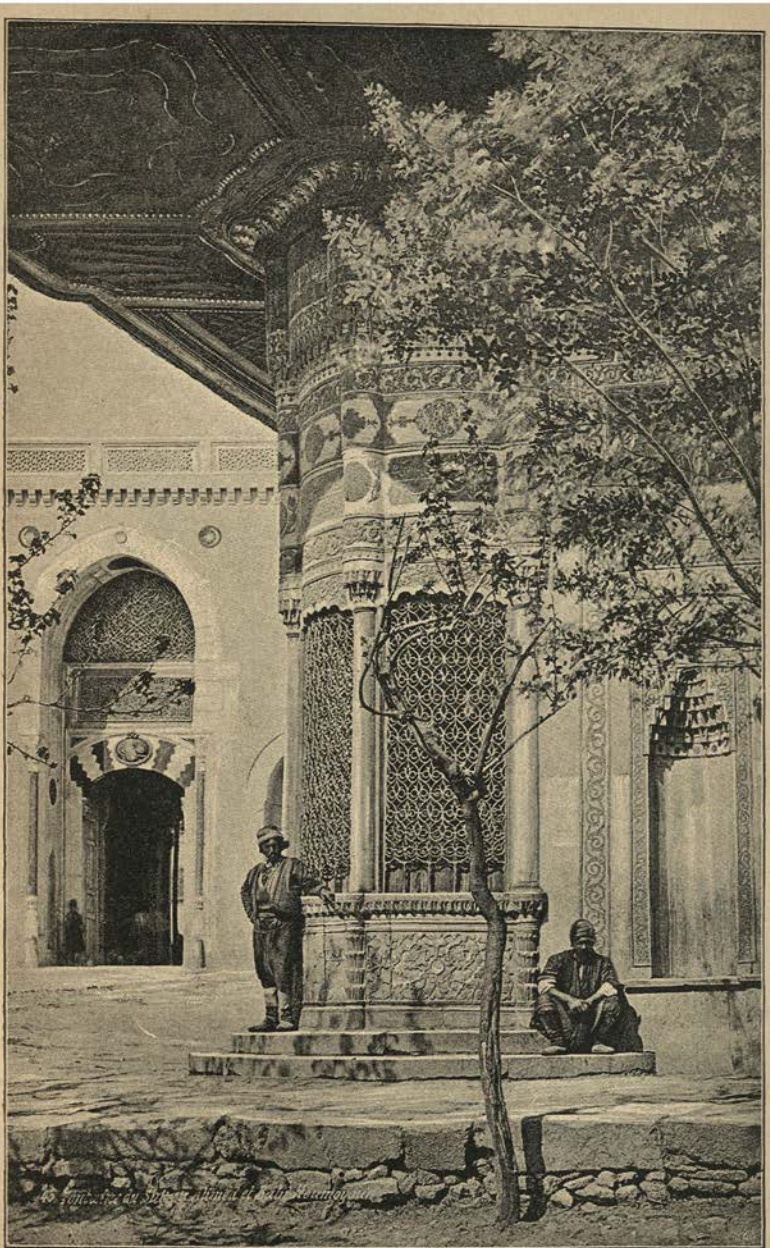
On entering the first large court, called most appropriately 'of the Janissaries' (such absolute masters were they here for so many centuries), I think my eyes fixed themselves first on a superb plane tree; such a tree as one only sees in Turkey, where men's heads are lopped off rather than timber, which is allowed to luxuriate from age to age secure from axe or hatchet. Even here you meet the touch of blood which pursues you in all things Turkish. Two stunted columns under the noble trunk, that ten men could hardly clasp, served for decapitation.

Several low buildings, including the Mint, magazines, imperial stables and accommodation for an army of slaves, much shaded by masses of dark trees, run round the court, which also formerly contained a hospital. The Greek Church of St. Irene, which was not converted into a mosque, and serves now as an armoury, stands out nobly, a venerable monument of the Byzantine style—



The Fountain of Ahmed

the round dome closely pierced by a circle of windows.

As St. Irene (founded by Constantine within the bounds of the Acropolis of his new city, but I fear I must admit rebuilt by Leo the Isaurian) was locked when I stood under the plane tree which waves over its front, I did not myself inspect the scimitar used by Mohammed II. in the siege, the sword of Scanderbeg, and armlet of Tamerlane, or the porphyry tombs of the early Greek Emperors Constantine and his son Theodosius, and of Julian the Apostate, said to have been taken by Mohammed II. from the Church of the Holy Apostles when turned into a mosque. To me they were uninteresting curios, of dubious origin, which I made no effort to examine.

Before me is the middle gate, Ortu Kapu, embowered in sombre trees, flanked by two extinguisher towers, black as the entrance to Erebus —the very portal of death.

Now it stands ajar, but formerly double doors inclosed a little space where the unconscious victim was caught as in a trap, and, if required, conveniently strangled by a cord passed from above, or finished off by a thrust in the ribs— equally quiet and convenient.

Above, over the arch, where I perceive four round apertures for light and air, were lodged the executioners, generally Ethiopian mutes, who could communicate with the divan within by a

secret passage, so that, the sentence having been pronounced, death followed instantly.

The third gate, Bab-i-Scadet (gate of Felicity), anciently guarded by eunuchs, leads into another court, much larger than the first, the broad-roofed gallery broken by antique portals. To the left is a tower, and near the gate the stone of Benektaschi, where all who rode, even ambassadors, were obliged to dismount, no horse, save the Sultan's, being permitted to set hoof within.

I pass to the right, up a steep staircase once guarded by eunuchs, where is still displayed to the traveller furnished with a firman the treasury of the Ottoman Empire, known as the green vaults of Constantine. Here, besides a throne of solid gold, set mosaic-like with uncut rubies, emeralds, and pearls (most ineffective and probably false), brought from Persia by Selim I., are jewelled armour, sabres, and pistols literally smothered in pearls, coral, rubies, and diamonds; cups of onyx and crystal, jade and gold, horse-furniture and stirrups, and bridles of gold. To this collection, including whole drawerfuls of unset jewels, regarded as of no more value than buttons, each Sultan is supposed to have contributed something.

Near by is the Chirkau Scherif, or Hall of the Holy Garments or Standard, which, with the staff, sabre, and bow of the Prophet is not shown. The standard which calls around it the whole

Mussulman world as soon as it is displayed, being absolutely sacred, is kept in a *mihrab*, or sanctuary, the Sultan's hand alone brings it forth.

To the left, opening from this court, is the Hall of the Divan or hall of reception, surmounted by a dome, each detached building being supported by marble columns cut in delicate lace-work; also the Gothic Hall with its pillars and inscriptions, a memorial of Theodosius' victory over the Goths; stables, archives, and wardrobes for the robes of state, once under the care of the black and white eunuchs, now all more or less abandoned and dilapidated.

The kitchens are also roofed with domes, perforated to let out the smoke. Here the Sultan's pages, aghas of the Seraglio, eunuchs, slaves; the Grand Vizier also if he dined at court; and strangers called in to audience, if their lives were spared—all fed. Forty thousand oxen was the yearly complement consumed, and sheep, goats, calves, pullets, pigeons, and 'green geese'—as distinguished from the coarse fattened Michaelmas bird—in proportion.

For ceremonies of marriage and birth all the eccentricities of the Turkish *cuisine* were displayed. Whole gardens, large as flower parterres, with fountains, lakes, swans, giraffes, and camels, were represented in sugar; out of sheep roasted whole flew myriads of small birds; and the innumerable sweets which fed the harem, the

choice and delicate flavour of which one can now judge of by tasting those displayed on the trays of the street vendors, or in obscure little shops, into which my dragoman Spiro dives on our way.

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Through this court passed all the glory of the empire—ambassadors on their way to the Hall of the Divan, through files of guards and eunuchs, the galleries round being decorated with scarlet cloth and innumerable small flags, such as are still seen in mosques and shops. Envoys from every part of Europe and Asia bearing offerings; horses from the desert, elephants carrying thrones of gold, gazelles, caged lions, carpets from Persia, embroidered cashmeres from India, porcelain from China, furs of priceless value from the North, cups of virgin gold, slaves from Broussa, and poets from Bagdad to chaunt the praises of the Padishah. Through here filed continually troops of fiercely-moustached janissaries in their coarse white turbans, loose jackets, and yellow boots, shouldering along with the swagger of privileged guards, a perfect arsenal round their waists; slaves of every country, colour, and nation; aghas robed in pelisse of cloth of gold lined with rare furs, bearing the same arms as the soldiers, only of silver or gold, to be distinguished from aghas of the Seraglio in white with a gold band and cylindrical cap; the chief eunuchs, Kislar-Agassi, black and white, equal, if not superior, in influence

to the Grand Vizier—giants for whom all made way, as they passed and repassed in the service of the harem, scented and perfumed like pomade pots, splendid in brocaded satin, red tunics, and immense drawers. The Grand Vizier, surrounded by his guard on his way to an audience, a figure changed so often by frequent deaths and dismissals, only to be recognised by his conical turban of white muslin banded with gold ; the overseers of the perfumes, always an important office in the East ; the keepers of the sacred standard of the Prophet, before which all true believers fall prostrate with loud cries, invoking the name of Allah ; the muezzin of the Court, whose duty at break of day is to call to prayer from the minarets within the gardens ; astrologers who all night long study the stars, to determine the auspicious hour for the Sultan to rise ; the chief doctor with his caftan of honour ; and dervishes fresh from a pilgrimage to Mecca, naked save for a filthy waist-cloth bound about their loins ; the chief cook, wearing on his shoulder an enormous spoon, ending in a point like a lance, busy on his errands ; the chief armourer, carrying the Sultan's sabre in a velvet case respectfully on his shoulder, and the master of the robes, bearing on his arm the lactan to be worn by the Padishah when he goes abroad.

The chief huntsman or chamberlain, a gay figure, with gold cap, shaped into a horn at back and front ; the chief ulema, to impart religious

instruction; secretaries and writers with parchments and petitions sent in the night before; pashas with long beards, from distant provinces, come to pay their court or to present petitions, —all known and recognised by the colour of the turban, the cut of the robe, the lining of the sleeve: the muftis in white, the viziers in green, chamberlains in scarlet, ulemas in violet, sheiks in blue, aghas in purple, pachas in red, and so on through every shade of colour, and of costumes from Tartary to Philippopolis—Bulgarian, Greek, Albanian, Montenegrin, Armenian, to the very confines of the Caspian Sea, not to forget gaolers and mutes, the very sight of whom makes the blood curdle!

Other personal attendants of the Sultan were there too: sandal-bearers, and eunuchs whose business it was to lick the floor before spreading the royal carpet, a wardrobe-keeper to look after his turbans and dust and polish the diamond aigrettes which glitter in the folds; the barber who shaves the Sultan's head—his beard was cut by scissors, as not trusting a razor so near his throat; oculists to stain the eyelids of the ladies, and purveyors of flowers with which the harem was decorated, to say nothing of messengers continually passing and repassing on errands of life and death to pashas and ministers, bearers of those terrible Hatti-scherifs (edicts) which often desolated whole cities and provinces—a motley crowd, yet all pass-

ing without haste or confusion through the dark gate of Ortu Kapu—phlegmatic, calm, be it to live or die.

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The first object seen in passing the gate of Bab-i-Scadet is the Hall of the Divan, fortunately spared by the fire which obliterated so much ; a large, low room in an isolated kiosk, dimly lighted by small windows round a gold-incrusted dome: the walls, which are gilt and decorated with Moorish lace-work and porcelain panels, entered by a door flanked by two fountains. The floor is covered by a fine matting, replaced in winter by Smyrna carpets ; over the throne, which is cumbrous and faded, is a *baldacchino* fringed with pearls, at the corners balls, crescents, and horsetails, those barbarous emblems of migratory tribes.

In the absence of the Sultan, the Grand Vizier presided at the Council, and heard all cases, civil and criminal, without appeal, assisted by ulemas, muftis, the Capitan Pasha, admirals (and, on occasions of special importance, by the Sheikh-ul-Islam), with the seal-bearer to affix the Sultan's name, and executioners ready at the smallest sign. In this throne-room also the ambassadors were received, the light being so managed as to display the sacred visage of the Padishah only in profile, when he was present.

I saw above, half-way up the wall, a small

window concealed by a grating, where the Sultan is said to have watched the deliberations of the divan below.

How imperturbable they must have looked, these stolid Orientals, their features concealed under spreading beards and ample turbans, motionless as statues, secretly consulting with each other in agitated whispers what might be the will of the tyrant listening above! Not a step sounds on the soft matting, and their voices, when they do speak, are low and passionless, dealing out life and death in the same inanimate fashion. At a signal, the mutes seize the victim standing in the midst, and twist the thin skein of silk about his neck; a struggle, a quiver, and all is over, the body carried out, covered by a cloth, under the trees, among the songs of birds and the murmur of many fountains—to the dark waves of the Bosphorus.

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From the year 1453, twenty-eight sultans have occupied this Seraglio, of whom three have been ostensibly strangled and three deposed, which means too often a mysterious and violent death. 'Of two caliphs kill one,' says the law, which in this respect is faithfully observed.

The conqueror, Mohammed II., was the first to preside at the divan, his feet resting on a Persian carpet embroidered in pearls, a portfolio set before him on a desk or *ambone* of ebony and mother-of-pearl, on which lay a copy of the Koran, set

with such emeralds and rubies as sufficed by their brilliance to light up the hall.

What was his character may be judged by the laws he instituted on commencing his reign.

'The majority of my jurists have told me,' he says, 'that those of my descendants who mount the throne may put their brothers to death in order to secure the repose of the sovereign.' A promising beginning for a new dynasty. Mohammed was succeeded by his son Bajazet and his grandson Selim. Five of Selim's brothers were at once executed in accordance with the law of royal fratricide, said by Von Hammer to have been imported from the East in imitation of the laws of Zenghis Khan.

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How many pass by, a crowned multitude, all stained with blood! Ahmed, second of that name, saying 'Kosh, kosh' ('It is good') to everything proposed by the eunuchs, the mutes standing ready behind the Persian curtains at the door. Othman II., vain, handsome, presumptuous; and Selim III., who received here the treacherous mufti sent to announce that, by the will of the janissaries, he had ceased to reign.

As the mufti slowly approached, his eyes cast down, and prostrated himself before him, feigning a sorrow he did not feel, Selim fixed on him his penetrating eyes, as though to read at a glance the hypocrisy of his soul.

'Oh, my master,' were his words, 'if I come on a mission of woe, it is to prevent the invasion of a furious multitude into your sacred presence. The janissaries and the people have proclaimed your cousin Mustafa, sultan. Resistance is useless. Kismet!'

As if addressed to a statue, the words fell on Selim's ear. He rose from the throne, and, casting a tender glance at his prostrate slaves, passes into the inner 'Court of the Harem,' towards the secluded kiosk, called 'the Cage,' where already he had spent twenty-eight years in seclusion before coming to the throne.

On the threshold he meets Mustafa, hastening to occupy the seat he had resigned. 'Brother,' said he, addressing him with gravity, 'Allah has taken from me to give to you; I have lost the confidence of my people by wishing to raise them to the rank they ought to hold. At least let me be judged by my good intentions.'

But Mustafa, whom he had treated like a son, scarcely replied, and Selim slowly disappears under the archway he is never to pass again in life.

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But the virtues of Selim had made many friends, notably his devoted follower, Mustafa Baraiktar, Pasha of Rustchuk, then fighting at the head of his Albanians against the Russians; and no sooner had he reached Constantinople,

than, unfurling the sacred banner of the Prophet, which had been confided to him in the war, he demands that the gates of the Seraglio should be opened to him.

'Only by the command of the Sultan Mustafa,' is the answer of the bostandjis from within.

'Talk not to me, base slave, of that traitor, Mustafa!' cries Baraiktar. 'Show me my master and yours, Sultan Selim.'

An immediate assault was ordered, but the brief delay is fatal to Selim. Instant orders were given by Mustafa that Selim and his own brother Mahmoud should be strangled. Alas! too well was he served. A fearful struggle ensues, and Selim is despatched. One quarter of an hour would have saved him!

But at the very moment that Baraiktar, thinking to prostrate himself before the living Sultan, passed the gate, Selim's dead body was cast before him by the eunuchs. 'Behold, O Baraiktar,' they cry, 'the master and Sultan whom you seek!'

For a moment the brave heart of the Albanian leader quailed. He sank on the ground, clasping the lifeless body in his arms. But soon mastering his grief, he rushes on, followed by his Albanians, until he reaches the Hall of the Divan where the Sultan Mustafa is seated. 'Seize that traitor!' he shouts with a voice of thunder, 'and bring me his young brother Mahmoud to

take his place. He at least is innocent of this deed.'

And thus it came about that Mahmoud, who had been saved marvellously by a faithful slave, concealed in a pile of carpets, became Sultan, and the vile Mustafa passed out of life by the same ignoble death to which he had condemned Selim.

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Whatever demands for victims were made by the janissaries and the spahis were deliberated in the Divan before the Sultan.

Here Beyley Bey, surnamed the Falconer for his rapacity, meets his death—paying for the favour of his master, Amurath III.—by the hands of janissaries, who attacked the Divan in force.

'Give us up Beyley Bey, O Sultan, or we shall know how to find our way even to you,' was their message. And the effeminate Amurath basely yields, and the head of his faithful minister was given into their hands.

Here Mohammed III. received the heads of nineteen of his own brothers, of all ages, from infancy to manhood, a ghastly spectacle, ranged before him where he sat. Here another Amurath (4th) sacrificed his whole divan to save his life—the Grand Vizier Hafiz and seventeen others.

Amurath, a boy of twelve, destined to a brilliant future, would have saved his friend Hafiz, and had ordered him to take boat at the Port of

the Cannon on the shore of the Seraglio. But on the third day of the revolt, so bold had grown the rebels, he himself was insolently called forth from the Hall of the Divan into the outer court to parley with the spahis.

'What is your will, my servants?' he asks, standing under the branches of the broad plane tree, his aghas drawn up around in an improvised divan.

In loud and insolent tones came the reply: 'The seventeen heads we have demanded. Give us those, that we may tear them to pieces, or it will be the worse for you, O Amurath.'

And as they spoke the spahis press so close upon him they almost touch his sacred person.

'You give no heed to my words,' answers Amurath, seeing that he risked his life. 'Why did you call me forth, if not to reason with you?' But those from behind, seeing his danger, drew him back into the gate of Bab-i-Scadet, and had not the pages quickly barred the doors, the spahis would have followed him.

Then it was intimated to Amurath that, unless he complied, his own death would follow. And the faithful Hafiz was actually summoned back from Scutari to die, the Sultan meeting him at the Water Gate. A solemn divan was held, to which were summoned four leaders of the insurgents, two janissaries and two spahis, Amurath himself praying them not to profane the honour of

his pledged word; but the soldiers answer with the same savage cry: 'Let the Caliph give us the seventeen heads, or abdicate.'

Then Hafiz, as great a philosopher in his way as Socrates, having made the ablutions necessary for death, stands forth and speaks:—

'My Padishah, let a thousand such slaves as Hafiz suffer for your sake. Do not yourself put to death your servant, but give me up to these men, that I may die a martyr.' Then he kissed the earth and exclaimed: 'In the name of God most merciful, there is no power but his,' and walked forth out of the gate into the outer court, the Sultan weeping bitterly as he passed.

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To the Seraglio Amurath returned years after in triumph from his Persian victories, mounted on a Nogai charger, sheathed in armour of polished steel, a leopard skin on his shoulder, and in his turban a triple aigrette—trumpets and cymbals sounding before him. Twenty-two Persian khans and captives walk at his stirrup, all the vessels of war firing salutes, so that the Bosphorus literally blazes with fire, the people casting themselves on the ground and shouting 'Yasha, Padishah!' Who could have imagined that this young hero was to die an early death at twenty-eight? He had then grown so savage that his last words were to command the instant execution of his only brother Ibrahim, actually rising up in

his bed to behold what he supposed to be his dead body, and held back by the terrified attendants with difficulty until the imaum was led in by the pages, and commenced reciting the prayers for the dead.

What blood has flowed here! What carnage! By the sword came the Mussulman, and with the sword he was ruled under the iron hand of the janissaries. Already it was said of Turkey: 'It has become old and crazy, through the many vices which remain when youth and strength are gone.' This was in 1623. 'The sick man' has lived long: two hundred and thirty-two years, up to the day when the same metaphor was used by Nicholas of Russia to Sir Hamilton Seymour, and is still likely to linger, upheld by the jealousy of the European States, no one consenting that the other shall hold Constantinople.

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Beside the Hall of the Divan are the library, the college of the royal pages, and the baths of Selim, vast halls of marble divided into kiosks various in shape, all glowing with arabesques, coloured glass, and inscriptions. Kiosks for reposing and for sleep, with windows all open to the light and air in the Turkish manner, the outer walls panelled in gold and lacy arabesques of fruit and flowers, with porcelain and pictures of all and everything but the human face or form, which are forbidden by the Koran. Outside, birds from

every clime sing, suspended in gilt cages from the walls, or on the edges of ever-bubbling fountains which serve the baths.

In a corner of the third court, of which so little remains, was the entrance to the harem (a name of wondrous enchantment), situated on the crest of the hill, with delicious peeps through glowing woods of the darkly crowned heights of Scutari and the blue expanse beyond. The harem was divided into innumerable white-walled pavilions and kiosks glittering with gilded domes, pinnacles, crescents, and balls, on a succession of terraces fairy-like in beauty, crossing and re-crossing each other in a charming confusion; the painted roofs, shading arbours, and *pergolas* gay with flowers all open to the sun, forming a cluster of garden palaces erected at various times by many sultans. Here lived the favourite kadine like a queen with her own separate kiosk, suite, slaves, caïques, and carriages. The Valideh (mother) Sultana with a royal retinue; the aunts, daughters, and sisters of the Caliph; and the young princes and children (very numerous sometimes, as in the case of Ahmed, who left one hundred and three); the Gheducha (daughters of felicity), each about to bear a child to the Sultan; the nurses who carried the babies born in the year; players on stringed instruments to amuse the kadines; and Ethiopians, bearing great silver plateaux of sweets on their heads.

Here was to be seen the Kislar Agha of the black eunuchs, gorgeous with ringing plaques of gold, sounding like bells, conducting a bevy of princesses on their way to the bazaar; another, escorting the stately Valideh, closely veiled, to visit her son, followed by her court of slaves; a third, guarding the Sultana of the day, setting forth for the bath; or awaiting fresh convoys of beauties, to be drilled and educated to take their places when the imperial appetite is satiated; Albanian, Greek, Georgian and Circassian, offered as tribute, or stolen by pirates, or purchased in Asiatic markets—all perfumed, painted, and apparelled to catch the eye. A world as of magic, in which the eunuchs rule, and the Sultan, however often he changes, is exalted to a god.

The harem was furnished with all the refinements of the voluptuous East: divans of choicest cashmere, woven with gold and gems, carpets of Persia set with pearls, vases from China, Indian cabinets of lacquer, tables of mother-of-pearl, cups worth a principality, tortoiseshell and cedar ceilings raftered and divided with plates of gold, fountains in *vasques* of priceless jasper and agate, and jewels in every corner.

Here took place such festivals as are recorded in the 'Book of Games,' specially in the reign of Ahmed III.; a merry monarch, spite of his vices, who loved to amuse himself in a gorgeous way,

whether at Bairam, saluting the mantle of the Prophet, or visiting the Grand Vizier accompanied by his harem, on which occasion the streets were cleared much as in the time of Lady Godiva and 'peeping Tom.'

At the marriage festivals of his three daughters, who espoused three sons of viziers, the Sultan himself ordered the nuptial palms, and the gardens of sugar, six yards by four, set out in tents formed of masts and sails, for which ancient cypresses were cut down to serve as pillars and trellises of verdure. The feasting was enormous. Not only cooks and confectioners, but singers, dancers and jugglers, were collected from all parts of the empire, and the famous kettles and cauldrons of the janissaries were requisitioned, the pots and pans of the imperial kitchen not sufficing.

The fêtes given by Ahmed are far too complicated to describe. Who can do justice to the feast of tulips, where, by the skill of the master of the flowers, who received a regular diploma, each flower on the broad parterres was transformed into a separate lamp; or describe in adequate words the revels in the Kiosk of Pearls, in the lower part of the garden on the shore? And how the Sultan entered, held up under the arms, as if he had no legs, while his eldest son, Mohammed, wearing a *panache* of heron's feathers and diamonds in his turban, with his two brothers,

also held up under the arms by the chiefs of the eunuchs—appeared before their father seated on the throne in presence of his Court, to take their first lesson in writing?

When all was ready, the crescents and the horses' tails waving in the breeze—for these gilded kiosks were constructed almost *à jour*, the Grand Vizier, taking in his arms the eldest of the young princes, laid him on the carpet in front of the Grand Mufti, before a desk or pulpit covered with scarlet cloth, upon which the mufti showed him the first five letters of the alphabet, the prince repeating them after him, and by a sign signifying that he desired to kiss the mufti's hand. The ceremony was repeated with his brothers, after which the various viziers and high dignitaries received robes of honour, and the princes robes and presents too.

But these grand celebrations did not always end so auspiciously, for a certain agha of the janissaries named Tehalik, having rudely defied the council, was accosted towards the end of the entertainment by the Grand Vizier, carrying on his arm a robe of honour, and politely informed that he was made governor of Cyprus.

'For what crime?' asked the agha, turning deadly pale under the folds of his vast turban, but, with that apparent phlegm proper to a well-bred Oriental, giving no outward sign of fear. What the Vizier replied is not recorded. But the

answer, whatever it was, did not prevent the agha from rushing out into the first court to find his horses and escort, which however had disappeared. Understanding from this that his last hour was come unless he could escape, he tore down hill to the Port of the Cannon below, and, finding a caïque, hurriedly rowed across to Scutari. Alas! poor agha! As his boat touched the strand, another caïque followed him, and, surrounded by the executioners, he was strangled with the knot of his own sabre.

Besides the Kiosk of Pearls, there were in old times other kiosks, dotted up and down the hill among the trees, domed like miniature mosques, and dazzling to behold; the Kiosk of Yali, turned towards the harbour of the Golden Horn; the New Kiosk, whence, at the setting of the sun, the Sultan, seated on a divan, could conveniently survey his fleet riding at anchor on the Bosphorus; the Kiosk of Mirrors (and one can imagine how sweetly fanciful this was), with incrusted walls of golden stalactites, fountains, arabesque embroideries and ruddy Persian tiles; the Kiosk of Cannon, on the shore, from which dead bodies in sacks were cast into the silent deep; the Kiosk of the Sea, overlooking the lovely Sea of Marmora, and the snowy heights of Mount Olympus, used as a private divan by the Valideh Terkhan, during the youth of that mighty hunter Mohammed IV., her son. Of course Mohammed desired to kill his

brother, and the secret divans held here by his mother were to prevent it. As a strong-minded and practical Sultana, she kept the young prince within her own apartments. One night, however, Mohammed entered with a dagger, resolved to end the question and his brother's life ; but two slaves who slept at Terkhan's head, not daring to speak in his presence, touched and awoke her. At which a scene of violence ensued—the mother clinging round the neck of her son, imploring the Sultan to strike her rather than him, and Mohammed yielding, the two poor slaves who had saved the sleeper's life served as expiation, and were at once put to death. The Kiosk of Roses—delicious name, wafting to us odours of otto to this day—where the young pages were drilled, while veiled kadines watched through the boughs their nascent charms ; the Kiosk of the Reviews, higher up upon the hill, where the Sultan could sit concealed under sheets of entwining vines and eglantine, and see file by all who passed to the Council in the Divan ; the Kiosk of Alai, also high on the hill, under the shadow of St. Sophia ; and, finally, the Kiosk of Sepedgiler, at the extremity of the Seraglio, from which the Padishah could behold sailing into the sea that splendid fleet which was for ages the terror of Europe.

If any of these kiosks were in the style of the sweet little building I saw in the lower part of the Seraglio garden where I first entered, lined with

deep blue Persian tiles, and panelled in red and gold, they must have been perfectly enchanting.

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Deep in these labyrinthine groves, pink with the flush of roses, and girded by the blue sea, the favoured sultanas passed the careless hours. The dagger and the bowstring were there, but hid among the flowers. The famous three kadines of Amurath III., who for years governed the empire in his name; the cruel Venetian, Safizi, mother of his successor, Mohammed III., who caused these unhappy beauties to be bowstrung and drowned in sacks; the fair Mahpeike (Beauty of the Moon), who ruled the empire as mother of Amurath IV., living to become a strong-minded old lady, who, as has been said, as her son was dying saved the dynasty of Othman by the false news of the murder of his brother Ibrahim, the last of his race.; the kadine of the thousand shawls, and Kebia Gulny of the hundred carriages, the invisible despot of the Divan, and Sekuzula (Sweet Lump of Sugar), who alone could set her coward Sultan Ibrahim in motion, she herself being provided with a chariot incrusted with precious stones. This was the Sultan who decked his beard with jewels, and in such guise appeared in public, the people grumbling, because Egyptian Pharaoh of Red Sea memory had done the same.

Khourreen (Joyous One), whom the world

knows as Roxalana; the Sultana Buffo, weeping at thirty because she was placed on the 'retired list,' and had no chance of accompanying the Sultan to his palace on the Bosphorus; the favourite of Ahmed II., who had amassed more riches than remained in the treasury, and was requested to disgorge or die; the beautiful Retimo, raised by her charms to become the favourite of Mahmoud IV., and destined to twenty years of power under her sons, Mustafa and Achmet IV., no woman so powerful since the time of Roxalana; Kadijé, sister and counsellor of her brother Achmet; another favourite, who liked to shop by night in the Bazaar, and commanded that the stores should be kept open until day; and the two sultanas, Aazim and Seinuch, under Abdul Hamid, who were kept in seclusion, if not in 'the Cage,' for forty-eight years, tearing out each other's eyes for jealousy, but for all their fighting bearing him no child; all living a life of intrigue, not only amorous but political; for in this hotbed of sexuality conspiracy was rife, the beautiful kadines communicating, by help of the Court eunuchs, with muftis, viziers, ambassadors, and the all-powerful janissaries.

Not only did they know everything that was passing in the city and the divan, while affecting to listen to the verses of Abou Soud, or madrigals sent from ambitious pashas and beys—but they often received bribes to betray the Sultan.

And now as I look round for some traces of the thrilling scenes and dismal tragedies which have taken place, nothing comes to me but the silent air. All is mute; the calm of desolation haunts this dismal spot; the past has no voice to speak to the present.

No trace of the gilded pavilion of the lovely daughter of the governor of Negropont, who preferred death to the love of the brutal conqueror Mohammed II.; or the gigantic Armenian, favourite of Mohammed IV., whose little feet have become historical; the golden-haired Manifera (Rebia Mariferaz of the Blue Eyes), or Melicha (Star of the Night), beloved by Othman II.

Nothing, even, to tell me where Abdul Aziz was brought, so lately, in the grey dawn—ere the hand of death was on him — when he passed from the splendour of Dolmabatchke to this empty home.

Gone, all gone! Sultans, kadines, grand viziers, beys, aghas, slaves—of all lands and of all ages—white-haired kanoums, stately validehs; youth and age, virgins and mothers.

Some stabbed with a dagger as fine as a needle-point, or strangled with an almost invisible skein of silk, or poisoned by a sweet drink or luscious-tasted food. A mystery of all mysteries, known but to the waves, and those dark witnesses, the cypresses, which have survived the rack of fire and ruin.

CHAPTER XV

TURBEH OF MAHMOUD II. AND HIS LIFE

Tomb of Mahmoud II. — His dramatic escape — His dogged perseverance—A bright and cheerful tomb—Peculiar notions about the dead.

I WAS much interested in the *turbeh*, or tomb, of Mahmoud II.—'the Reformer,' as he is called —opposite the so-called Burnt Column, and close upon the enclosure of the Hippodrome, and the cincture of buildings that crowd and obscure St. Sophia.

And here I must pause again to note how near to each other are all these places of historic interest. The Mosque of St. Sophia, the gardens of the Seraglio, descending to the water; the upper gate or entrance, Bab-i-Houmayoun, called the Sublime Porte, with a splendid view; the exquisite Fountain of Ahmed, the most poetic monument in Stamboul; the Great Bazaar, with its endless ramifications—a town in itself; the Palace of the Seraskier, and the tower from which all the fires in Constantinople are watched day and night, and signals given by the firing of cannon, the

locality being decided by the number of times of firing; the Mosque of Bajazet II., with the pigeons; and that of the Suleimanyekh, with its graceful dome, seen from every side—are all near together; and close to the Burnt Column, on the other side of the road, the cisterns of Constantine, once a subterranean palace, now covered with mounds of rubbish and ruin. One great embedded hall, called of 'the thousand pillars,' occupied by filthy Jews and Armenians, weaving silk, the steps down to it being so broken and foul I had not the courage to descend: a place where a knife could be used with wonderful efficacy, or one of those mysterious captures be effected, peculiar to Constantinople—a hopeless disappearance, leaving no trace behind.

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As to the royal *turbehs*, sultans being short-lived, and each possessing a regiment of wives and children, they are all over Stamboul, and after seeing the condition of most of the tombs in the burial-grounds, one cannot wonder that the Padishah, Commander of the Faithful, should like to be treated with more respect than to appear without a head, perhaps, or turned tottering on one side.

Amid the general aspect of dirt and ruin, the eye rests with infinite pleasure on the neat circular building of white marble, that marks the resting-place of Mahmoud, supported by Corin-

thian columns, the walls broken by gilt grated windows, looking out from a grove of luxuriant trees and trimly laid flower-beds. A few lesser tomb-houses are scattered about, but detached, and in no way aggressive to the central edifice rising so white and fair.

Of course, the Corinthian style is ridiculous in an Eastern city; but, in consideration of its prettiness, one must pardon the anomaly and cast a benevolent thought on the memory of the gallant Mahmoud, son of Abdul Hamid, the last great sultan and reformer, who lies beneath.

Inside the cupola, with golden stalactites, fretted cornices, and rich hangings of silk and damask to shut out the light, I felt transported into a little room in the Alhambra. An enormous cut-glass chandelier in the centre is, however, distressingly modern, and looks as if purchased at some exhibition. But let that pass—in Turkey we must take things as they are.

A fresh-cheeked, black-eyed young Turk, with a spotless white turban and long dark caftan, indolently reposing on a flight of steps in the shade, jumped up and acted as my cicerone. Of course, before we entered, the obligatory slippers were placed on my feet; but there were no evil sullen looks, as if the guide would have liked to cut my throat, and was only restrained by the prospect of *bakshish*.

This young man actually laughed, and asked

my dragoman, Spiro, in Turkish, 'how old I was'; Spiro, extremely shocked, replying with much propriety that that sort of question is not polite. To which the young Turk, looking at me contemplatively, replied: 'Why not? She is not so very old.'

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I never clearly understood where the royal bodies are deposited—I presume, beneath the *turbeh*.

Looking at that sparkling aigrette on the turban of Mahmoud scintillating in the sun at the head of his bier, I fell to thinking of the extraordinary vicissitudes of his chequered career—an imperial romance impossible out of the East.

Cousin and favourite of the unfortunate Selim III., deposed by the janissaries, and imprisoned with him in the palace of the Seraglio, Mahmoud was instructed by him how to rule the Turks according to modern ideas.

There is a story that Mahmoud was at this time confined in 'the Cage,' or *kaweh*—not after the fashion of Cardinal Balue, but in the garden of the Seraglio: a kiosk with a dome, but no windows, or entrance except from the top.

To succeed the deposed Selim, Mahmoud's brother, Mustafa, was chosen Sultan by the janissaries, then in the apogee of their power.

But this was not enough. The same mutes and eunuchs had orders also to seize and bow-

string the young Mahmoud, which would leave Mustafa sole representative of the Ottoman Empire.

Rolled up, as I have said, in a carpet, or, as some say, concealed in the furnace of a bath, Mahmoud heard the baffled mutes searching for him in the very room where he lay hid! Can anything be more dramatic? He heard, too, the shouts of the Albanians, led by Baraiktar, proclaiming him Padishah; and before night the cannon of the Seraglio announced that his brother Mustafa had ceased to reign, and that he himself was Commander of the Faithful.

It was now that the modern ideas adopted by the unfortunate Selim were carried out by his nephew and pupil Mahmoud, in the various reforms which drew on him the fury of the janissaries, and ended in their destruction in the Hippodrome.

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No country has better or juster laws than Turkey in theory, but in practice they are lamentably disobeyed.

But on the whole, it must be doubted if the reforming Sultans gained much, for in this profoundly Asiatic people, hating the Giaour or infidel, there is no governing power but force, consequently no reform. Force confounded with fatality. What is, *must be*, and this idea is so innate that life leads *them*, instead of they themselves giving the direction to life. Education is

good; but of what use? Destiny rules. Destiny is not altered by education!

Thus there are in Turkey no fixed grades of society or of professions. Society is in confusion. A man who carries a tray of sherbet in the street may be transformed into a vizier to-morrow, while a really accomplished and educated tactician may be relegated into the wilds of Asia, or a first-rate sailor placed at the head of a medical college. There is no rule or reason in anything, but a general topsy-turvying depending on favour.

Now has modern civilisation been sufficiently extensive to make completely good what is lost of barbarian strength?

This is the question. The Turks are still, to the European mind, in the darkness of the Middle Ages. They are excellent soldiers, but has material progress replaced the ancient enthusiastic heroism which led them to the walls of Vienna?

Has nationality increased or diminished under the action of the new ideas; or are the changes bearing on these ideas too faint and ill-defined to have touched more than the surface; and in overturning the old institutions and ancient modes of thought, have the new really replaced them? Is not the Turk actually weakened at the core by his contact with European civilisation?

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The usurpation of Russia and the tremen-

dous war which followed were most disastrous to Mahmoud, in overturning his empire at the very time when peace was needful to develop his reforms. Never was unfortunate and well-intentioned reformer more cruelly exercised than he, when he found himself, not only involved in war, but surrounded by enemies of all kinds at home.

New kingdoms were rising on all hands, carved out of the inheritance of the house of Othman, notably that of Greece, involving so large an extent of territory.

Resolutely he faced all, with the old faith in destiny, and a determination to adhere to his own principles.

Now, whether in the abstract these principles were right or wrong, Mahmoud may be truly classed as a great and, even under reservation of his creed and education, a good man spite of the cruelties he felt justified in committing.

But in his dogged perseverance this son of fate had not reckoned on the power of Russia, from early times the enemy of his predecessors, the Greek emperors, personified then in the wild hordes pouring down the steppes by the Black Sea and the Danube, and now a settled and ostensible empire, determined to gain Constantinople for its own. Also he had ignored the conscience of Europe in favour of the Greeks.

To this conscience the stern will of Mahmoud would not bend. He refused to cut off that

kingdom from the provinces which came to him when invested with the scimitar of Mohammed in the Mosque of Eyoub.

The battle of Navarino, when the ships of England, France, and Russia joined against him, was the result on sea, and on land his model army failed to maintain the prestige of the janissaries trained in the old school, with their national equipment, characteristic arms, and reckless bravery.

To offer further details here of these recent campaigns which so narrowed the dominion and wrecked the national power would be useless.

The Treaty of Adrianople, 1829, was fatal to Turkey. The Ottoman Empire was dismembered and divided among enemies to her race and religion. Inevitable ruin seemed at hand, and had Mahmoud not been the man of energy and of courage he was—a modern hero in fact—his reforms, so courageously begun, would have ended both his reign and his nation.

As it was, the independence of Mehemet Ali was the last crowning act in the tragedy of his career. When his army and his fleet were treacherously made over to the Egyptians by his perjured officers, his gallant spirit had already left its abode of clay, and all that was mortal consigned to this elegant tomb (*turbeh*), where he lies, as he lived, full in the sight of his people.

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Meanwhile the young Turk, who was very obliging, and kept looking at me with laughing eyes—I suppose in the hope of coming to some further conclusion about my age—showed us some beautifully illuminated copies of the Koran, written in gold, over which he mounted guard, for the touch of a Christian would be defilement.

Then out of a silver casket he drew forth a long strip of fine muslin, covered with Arabic characters, the writing of Mahmoud himself while a prisoner with his uncle Selim in the 'cage' of the Seraglio, and by his own desire placed within his tomb.

The remarkable cheerfulness of this *turbeh*, full of trees and flowers, and brightened by the rays of a blazing sun, may account for the hilarity of the young Turk, its custodian.

The whole traffic of Stamboul passes by in this Street of the Divan. Children play in the sun outside the open fence, shadowed by other tombs. Horsemen gallop by. The hum of voices pierces even the mortuary walls. Carriages roll by with fat officers and swollen beys, pashas and their aides-de-camp pass on Arab horses as sleek and dignified as themselves. A group of veiled women flounder along in loose yellow shoes, stopping to bargain with a seller of cakes and sweets; the eternal tram-car glides up the hill, with its cargo of various nationalities; the fountain of the Sultana Zeineb, opposite St. Sophia,

cools the air, and the sun shines fiercely on the kiosks and open galleries and overtopping roofs.

Nor are the dead so forgotten, as I imagined from the shameful state of the Petit Champ des Morts. Flowers are planted over the tombs around, railed off by a fence, and turtle-doves and pigeons feed on the rank grass, as it is believed that their cooing solaces the spirits of the departed.

The aromatic odour of the cypress is supposed to neutralise all pestilential exhalations, and as no tree in Turkey is ever felled, one understands the origin of those dark mysterious groves which are one of the greatest charms of Stamboul and the Bosphorus. Beneath their shadow many a woman comes with her companions to spread her prayer-carpet, and turbaned Turks will sit in absolute abstraction upon the ground, as if to hold communion with those beneath.

As everyone of distinction must have a grave to himself, where a cypress tree is usually planted, and the disturbance of the dead is looked on as a sacrilege, these woods have in the course of ages become forests.

The cemetery of Scutari, on the summit of Bougaloo, on the Asiatic shore, is the favourite site, from the dim conviction that the Moslem will ultimately be driven back to Asia, just as the Greeks believe that they will return and enter in triumph through the Golden Gate. The same

prophecy was made in the old days of Justinian and Heraclius, whose descendants really lived to see its fulfilment in the person of Michael Palæologus.

The body of a sultan is not placed in a coffin, but simply laid in the earth with thin boards over it, for the Turks have some peculiar notions about the dead.

From the moment of illness to that of burial, they believe the soul to be in torture. Hence the haste to lay the body *at rest*. A Turk never is seen to walk fast, except at a funeral. Like all the teaching of Mohammed, the reason for this is to be found in the exigencies of a hot climate, which renders the presence of a dead body dangerous to the living. The Koran, too, declares that he who carries a body for forty paces procures for himself the pardon of a great sin—an easy expiation!

CHAPTER XVI

MARRIAGE OF A VIZIER

Curious marriage etiquette—Costume of a sultana—A henpecked vizier—Overcome with sleep—The Selamlik—A Turkish *bon vivant's* meal—The sultana's creature.

WHEN the Sultan desires to confer the highest honour on a Grand Vizier, he gives him one of his sisters in marriage. The etiquette of this ceremony is extremely curious. Modern ideas have modified the rigour of the treatment of the husband, but he is made to feel his inferiority all his life.

The marriage of a sultana takes place in the presence of the imaum in the lady's palace. She is represented by the Chief Eunuch, if she has one; if not, by a friend; the Grand Vizier by the Minister of the Interior.

Next day the *fiancé* sends to inquire after her health and to offer her presents. Formerly these were obligatory, and consisted of six silver plates, a silver table, a cup full of sweetmeats, thirty others filled with milk, and fifty more with fruit.

A fortnight after, the sultana, deeply veiled—all sisters of the Sultan are sultanas—is conducted to the palace of the Grand Vizier with music and rejoicings, bringing with her her eunuchs in gala dresses.

At the portal the vizier is stationed to welcome his august bride, at once retiring in order to allow her to make her own way into the harem.

As the sun sets the agha, or eunuch, is charged with the duty of conducting the bridegroom to the sultana. A rigid etiquette obliges her to receive him with scorn, refusing even to look at him. No word is spoken; all takes place in *dumb show* and lasts some time. Then the bride rises with a disdainful air and retires to her apartments, the eunuch at the same time taking the slippers of the husband and placing them at her door.

This trifling action is esteemed of the utmost importance, as marking the fact that the husband has taken possession of the harem.

Then the eunuch retires and a second meeting takes place; the bride, seated on a divan in the place of honour, again receives the unfortunate vizier or effendi, who now throws himself at her feet and remains kneeling until she speaks.

At last she says 'Give me water,' at which he, poor man, presents a silver salver on his knees, at the same time entreating the scornful fair one to unveil, which request she refuses.

No sooner has she tasted the water than two

slaves bring in two plates: on one are roasted pigeons, in the other sweetmeats, which they place on low tables before the divan.

'Eat, I beseech you, sun of my soul,' says the bridegroom imploringly.

'No, I will not!' haughtily answers the bride.

The bridegroom, at this point reduced to a state of desperation, calls in the eunuch, who lays the richest of his presents at her feet.

A little softened by the sight of the costly offerings—jewels, silks, and sweetmeats—she permits the Grand Vizier to take her under the arm, conduct her to a low table, and present her with a mouthful of pigeon. She in return, a little pacified, places delicately between his lips a piece of candied sugar.

The table is then removed, the sultana retires to her divan, the eunuch retires, and the spouses remain alone.

But a rigid étiquette forbids the smallest approach to familiarity, nor does the lady unveil. The night is passed in what are called rejoicings, consisting of music and dancing and all kinds of exhibitions of *ombres chinoises* or some other very childish pastime.

Now the Vizier in question (I cannot mention names) we will call Mahmoud Pasha, and the lady is of royal rank.

No longer young, she has with malicious pleasure made Mahmoud endure to the utmost

the degradation of his position as a bridegroom before entering his palace on the Bosphorus, near the imperial abode of Dolmabatchke.

Now this particular lady does not care for him, add to which she is very haughty and had never been comely—all good reasons for a high degree of temper, which she undoubtedly possesses. In order to hide the ravages of time, as is the fashion of Turkish ladies, she paints, or rather enamels, to excess.

They all, Heaven knows, lay on the rouge so thickly that you see it plainly through their veils as you pass them in caïques on the Bosphorus in that clear, translucent air; but this sultana went beyond this, and looks like a pallid corpse with two round red spots on either cheek. Deep black circles are round her eyes, her mouth is a mass of carmine, and her hair dyed as black as jet. She generally dressed like a girl, in transparent, embroidered scarves, fastened with a diamond pin round her rather thick waist, over a long-shaped garment or pelisse, open in front, and lined with brilliant silk bordered by fur, beneath which was a rich petticoat which just concealed trousers of striped Broussa muslin.

This was her house dress for the harem, but when she goes abroad in her carriage or caïque it is greatly modified to suit the fashion *à la Franca.*

Mahmoud Pasha, though a powerful minister, was a despicable little man—a round, fat, little

Turk, with a large stomach and weak legs—infirmities said to be due to his disregard of the Prophet's prohibition as to the use of wine.

Towards such a spouse the lady can feel no affection, but all the same she is jealous and cruel, and firmly believes that anyone honoured by the possession of a sister of the Sultan should have no eye for Circassian or Greek kadines, let them be ever so dark-eyed and enticing.

Now there had been a suspicion in her mind, encouraged by the Chief Eunuch, who naturally pandered to his mistress in order to keep his place—that Mahmoud had cast glances (round the corner, for, knowing his wife, he was extremely careful) at a certain young Circassian called Ikbal, lately introduced into the harem for the special service of the sultana—a girlish beauty, with a soft, childish face and a tall and supple figure.

There was a mystery about Ikbal which the sultana was resolved to solve, and thus she set about it. The next time Mahmoud craved an audience (for, as a subject, he dared not intrude his presence on his wife unless specially summoned) the treacherous Alie, dressed in smiles, receives him with unusual graciousness.

'Sit by me, Pasha Effendi,' she says, making room for him on her own divan. 'I see you are out of breath. Make yourself quite at home.'

Now the fact was that the Grand Vizier had been dining out, and had found the brand of

champagne so much to his taste that he was in rather a comatose condition, and somewhat inclined to sleep.

Instead of sitting down he stood before his wife, staring at her.

'Your Highness sent for me,' he says at last, hesitating. 'My agha told me on my return that, whatever was the time, I was to come.'

'Yes, yes, Mahmoud, I said so.' And she pushes him gently into a chair. 'I want to see you; is not that enough?'

Mahmoud, more and more mystified, held his tongue, but such unusual condescension alarms him so much that the perspiration stands out in heavy drops on his forehead, specially when the sultana seizes his hand and, holding it in both hers, looks into his face.

'Mahmoud,' she says in a soft voice, puckering up the paint on her cheeks into a smile, 'I have not treated you well of late. Your manner towards me tells me you feel it. I really am sorry, you are such a good man, so kind, so affectionate. My conscience reproaches me; I would not let my slaves see it; so I sent for you late and alone. Mahmoud, can you forgive me?'

At this appeal his little black eyes begin to wink and a violent flush spreads over his cheeks. He was very sleepy, and, after all, the sultana is a woman.

'Highness!' he mutters, drawing up close

to her. 'It is for me to ask pardon—I have not behaved well.'

'Ah,' replies the artful sultana—a wicked expression rising on her face—'you confess it! You too have been to blame. How amiable is this confession! It really draws tears from my eyes.' And she affects to weep and wipes her painted eyes carefully with a gold-embroidered handkerchief.

All this made a profound impression on the intoxicated man. It was so flattering, so uncommon, his head grew quite confused, and his hands clasp hers convulsively.

'Star of my life—Highness!' he murmurs passionately, speaking thickly and with great difficulty. 'Do not afflict me by these tears, flower of my harem, royal khanoum; your jealousy flatters me beyond words. Do not weep—I will tell you all. You have a right to know. But, in the name of the Prophet' (trying to raise her, for she had actually affected to cast herself before him), 'do not kneel to *me*, for I am guilty, most guilty, and you are a houri of sweetness.'

With a cry of rage she rose to her feet, but to Mahmoud in his fascination it came as a sob of pain when, taking his head in her hands, she gazed down on him and implores him to hide nothing from her.

'Hide? Why should I hide anything?' mutters the tipsy Vizier, clinging to her. 'It was

your pride, your distance; and such a trifle—a slave—only her state did excite my pity.'

The sultana felt a pang go through her, as if she had been stabbed, but she constrained herself, and leaning upon Mahmoud's shoulder continues in the same fawning voice.

'And the present you were to give me at Bairam,' she whispers, hissing the words into his ear. 'Was it this? Why did you not confide her to my special care? We have no child —I know her but as one of my slaves.'

'What! you would have stooped——' cries he. Then, suddenly recollecting himself, 'But who,' he asks in quite another tone of voice, 'can have told you?'

'Mahmoud, I know all. I hear you have sent away the girl?' The Grand Vizier nodded. He really cannot keep his eyes open. This prolonged conversation is too much for him.

'Where is she gone?' No answer. Mahmoud murmured a name she could not catch, strain her ears as she would. His head drops on his breast—he is fast asleep.

'Ah,' cries the sultana, as she contemplated him with scorn, all the furies in her face—'Ah, dog of a slave! You thought to deceive *me*, a born princess? But I will be revenged, royally revenged. When a sultana like me stoops to a wretch like that,' and she points to Mahmoud with a hand trembling with rage, 'we suffer no

rivals. To prefer a low Circassian to me, sister of the Padishah! By Allah! who has not granted me a child, this one shall pay for it!'

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When Mahmoud awoke he found himself in his own apartments, the sun streaming in at his windows.

Before the palace a number of crowded caïques awaited him. The occupants of some were come to ask his assistance to place a relation, others to be reinstated in favour with the Sultan: beys and officers who craved for higher grades, ministers to whom he had promised an audience.

The fumes of raki and of champagne made his head heavy. He was not old, but his habits of life had ruined his constitution.

Struggling to his feet, assisted by a servant, he threw on his clothes and tottered downstairs to the Selamlik—very late for a minister of state, it being about five o'clock by Turkish time, which would mean to us past ten A.M.

As for those awaiting him in the anteroom, they wiled away the time with the resignation of Turks, solacing themselves with a small cup of black coffee and a cigarette from time to time.

The anteroom of a great man is full or empty according as he is in or out of favour at Court; but Mahmoud, as brother-in-law of the Sultan, did not feel these changes so much as others, and generally found many gathered there.

Installing himself as comfortably as possible in an armchair within the saloon devoted to his ministerial duties, he orders his secretary to lay before him such papers as need his immediate signature and perusal. This duty over, occupying him about an hour, with a sigh of relief he flings the papers on the floor, lights a cigarette, rings a bell, and asks who are without desiring to see him.

Then the various beys and officers, introduced by the agha, sit on the edges of their chairs, and, tranquilly placing in their lips the amber mouthpiece of the long chibouk which is presented to them, proceed to make a circle round the fat Vizier, one by one humbly making such requests as they are come to solicit.

Fez on head, coats closely buttoned to the chin, and arms crossed, they might be so many wooden figures, only that they speak.

The Pasha, who has now thrown himself on a divan, and lies propped up by cushions, his waistcoat unbuttoned and his fez thrown to the back of his head, listens to them in silence, a serene smile on his face. A Turk habitually is always courteous, and never refuses to *promise* anything *unless provoked.* The performance of his promise is quite another thing.

About twelve o'clock, Frankish time, Mahmoud has finished his audiences, and a servant announces that his midday meal is ready.

He hears too, with astonishment, that his wife, the sultana, has gone out, accompanied by her women and eunuchs.

'What!' he cries. 'Gone? Why, I saw her in the evening, and she said nothing of such an intention.'

'Excellency!' replies the agha, 'I fear something has happened. Her Highness went so suddenly.'

'What?' again cries the Grand Vizier, beginning to feel anxious, but deeming it prudent to ask no more.

Nevertheless he goes into the Court to inform himself more fully.

There he hears that the Sultana Effendi has driven out to the imperial palace with all her slaves, and that Ikbal was among them—Ikbal, the unhappy one. For the life of him he cannot remember if last night he named her to his wife. He was far too tipsy to remember.

All this is very strange and seriously alarms him. The malice and cruelty of his royal partner are well known to him; now she is for the first time jealous, and he (fool that he was) has made a confession to her. But hunger and a desire to refresh himself with champagne in the midst of these anxieties soon drive him into his magnificent dining hall, where he seats himself on a divan. No table is visible, but an agha presents a basin of worked silver, with scented water, and

from a ewer pours it on his hands; another offers him an embroidered napkin; and a third pushes forward a low board of ebony worked with mother-of-pearl. As he is alone, he helps himself with his fingers. When a Turk of rank has Europeans to dine with him the table is spread *à la* Frank, but this is quite exceptional. Habitually he eats with his fingers, and ages will pass before (if ever) he adopts any other mode. To him a fork is useless. God has given him five fingers, and these are to be used.

It is rare for an Osmanli of high rank to dine alone in the *konak*, or town house. Turkish hospitality is proverbial and comes to them from their Kurdish origin. Besides, the educated Turk loves pleasant company, and gladly assists his digestion with the presence of his friends.

A Turkish dinner in all well-to-do houses consists of many small dishes, more tasted than eaten. Still they are there, and the variety is supposed to stimulate the appetite.

I will make Mahmoud's dinner typical of the sort of repast in vogue with a *bon vivant* such as he is.

About twenty dishes are served on the low board, before which he squats *sans cérémonie*, like a tailor, his legs under him. First come roast lamb stuffed with rice and currants, fish delicately fried, vegetables cooked in oil, mutton served with French beans, leaves of vines filled with rice, and a national dish called *dolma*, which,

with the breasts of fowls *à l'eau de rose* and flour baked with sugar or with syrup, is most popular. Then come ices of various kinds, sorbets flavoured with jasmine or attar of roses, prepared generally by the Turkish ladies themselves. All this is followed by a number of *hors d'œuvres* served in choice little plates, and, to crown the whole, the favourite dish of pillaf of rice, butter and tomatoes, that is present in every house and at every meal.

The great fault of these otherwise excellent repasts is the want of liquid. No carafe, no bottle, is on the table, and a glass of water is only brought when the meal is over.

An Oriental never drinks while he is eating, and wine is forbidden by the Koran.

How much the Grand Vizier attended to this precept has been seen.

Forgetting all about his wife's departure and the fate of the unfortunate Ikbal, Mahmoud sets to work in good earnest to enjoy his dinner, tasting every dish, enjoying the fruits, and dwelling lovingly on the ices and syrups.

The attendants had placed themselves out of sight, but eunuchs are privileged. The rich tapestry of the door is raised and the fat face of the eunuch of the princess appears. It was not a pleasant countenance at any time; now his small eyes, embedded in full, colourless cheeks, shine with a very evil expression, and a sinister smile shows two rows of white teeth, very much

such as a bear or a tiger displays when about to spring.

'May the food your Excellency eats nourish you,' says he, bowing, in so cynical a tone that Mahmoud looks up at him.

Now this man (if I can so call him) was the creature of the sultana. Her moods were echoed in his face, her will obeyed with the passive obedience of a well-trained animal. His mistress was cruel and revengeful enough, but words cannot paint how the eunuch is dreaded by the unfortunate girls in the harem. His heavy hand, sometimes, indeed, armed with a whip, is well acquainted with their snowy shoulders. To hurt and alarm the most attractive was in the nature of things his pleasure and enjoyment.

By a strange instinct these most despicable specimens of humanity are conscious of a sort of morbid jealousy which often leads them causelessly to persecute and ill-use the slaves entrusted to their charge.

'Your Highness,' continues he, 'looks surprised to see me in the Selamlik.'

'Not at all,' is the reply. 'I was expecting you to tell me the reason of my wife's precipitate departure.'

'Her Highness was called to the imperial harem by her august mother the Sultana Valideh.'

'For what reason?' The eunuch shook his head.

'You will not tell me?'

'I regret not to be able to do so, Pasha Effendi.'

At this insolent reply Mahmoud began to lose his temper.

'Dog of an Arab!' he cries, 'you dare to own it? Why have you then intruded your hateful company on me?'

'I came, Excellency, only to wish you a good appetite.' His voice is low and submissive, but a strange smile spreads over his face.

'If you are only come for that,' is the answer, 'go at once; your company rather tends to take my appetite away than otherwise.'

'I am sorry for that, your Excellency, but I see you have not yet partaken of the principal dish,' pointing to a large silver cover, 'which the attention of your sultana has provided for you.'

As he spoke, the eunuch raises his hand to lift the richly worked silver cover, the eyes of Mahmoud curiously following him.

'This new combination,' continues the eunuch, 'may explain better than I can the absence of her Highness.'

As he ceases to speak he flings down the cover rattling on the floor, and Mahmoud utters a cry so terrible that the attendants rush in.

Upon a large silver platter, swimming in blood, is the head of Ikbal, her eyes half open, her long plaited hair forming a diadem on her white brow. This is the revenge of the sultana.

CHAPTER XVII

MODERN SULTANS

Neither of Europe nor Asia—Abdul Aziz—Return from Western Europe—An unexpected reply—Nothing to learn from the European States—Dolmabatchke—The Sultan's evening ride—Mihri the Circassian slave—A lovely night—'Here is our little nightingale'—Empress Eugénie—Sultana Mihri—Stormy times—Young Turkey, supported by General Ignatieff—Dismissal of the Grand Vizier—Immovable indifference—An *impasse*—Murad Effendi—Promised freedom—Sealed orders—A bold plan, brilliantly carried out—Abdul Aziz is betrayed—Left without a friend—Murad's triumph—Abdul's wretched condition—Suicide without doubt—The funeral of Sultana Mihri—Hassan the Circassian—A terrible vengeance—Murad hopelessly insane—A truly Turkish Sultan.

ABDUL AZIZ, the Commander of the Faithful, King of Kings—by reputation prodigal, violent, capricious, voluptuous—was a powerful, commonplace-looking Turk with a full face and a pair of large, fixed eyes. His beard, while he was still young, was already streaked with grey, and his expression was altogether frank and rather gentle. He was graceful on horseback, as are all Turks, and appeared to advantage as he rode slowly into Stamboul on Fridays (the bridle held

by two officers), wearing a long dark paletot buttoned to the chin and light pantaloons.

Already the oddness of his conduct was noised about, specially his extraordinary greed of money, and the guilty extravagance with which he squandered it. Money he would have and money he obtained, often after displaying incredible fits of passion with his Ministers—to spend on some new palace; for it had been prophesied that he would live as long as he continued building. He was full of fancies. Lions and tigers brought from Africa and India, and parrots, were kept in cages all over the palace. Innumerable carriages were imported from all the European builders, and pianos which were to be played strapped on men's backs. Cock-fights interested him immensely, and he decorated the winning bird as Commodus did his horse, banishing the vanquished cocks into Cimmerian darkness, or in other words dark hen coops.

At times everything ceased to please him, and he went about suspecting all his Court and feeding himself on hard-boiled eggs. Then the terror of fire seized him, when he would have nothing made of wood near him, and read at night by the light of a single candle placed in a pail of water.

The only person who influenced him when in these mad moods was his mother, a woman without sense or judgment, and blind both to

his faults and to his danger. The public voice speedily condemned him.

'His fall is written,' said his Mussulman subjects, shaking their heads, while the softas intrigued, and his Ministers vacillated between the rival parties of Young and Old Turkey then dividing the State.

The solecism of a Moslem Sultan living in a Christian city on European land is striking. But so is his whole position, an absolute sovereign and high priest in this world and the next, every action of whose life is dictated by ancient custom and enforced by those about him, whom he dare not disobey.

Possessing boundless power over millions, he cannot insist on the slightest change, however trifling. Surrounded by guards, Ministers, and courtiers, who kiss the earth before him, his life is in his hand from day to day.

The master of a harem of all the loveliest women in the world, he can neither raise one to the throne nor acknowledge a child not born of a slave. Dreaded by Mussulmans throughout his empire the Christian citizens of his capital laugh at him, and ridicule both him and his religion. While his life and prosperity are prayed for by millions of Mussulmans in the remotest corners of the world, the man himself lives surrounded by conspirators, intriguers, and enemies, who secretly often execrate and curse him. Apparently the

most powerful of sovereigns, he is in reality the weakest and the most miserable, for he knows that at least half his predecessors have died a violent death. Placed between Europe and Asia, he belongs to neither. Adored as a god by so many different creeds and races, he ends by being deceived, blinded, watched, and tormented, until a life of perpetual danger and torment among his nearest relations too often ends by a voluntary resignation or assassination.

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If I followed the bent of my own fancy, I might be inclined to carry out in detail my pictures of Byzantium and the thrilling vicissitudes of the Greek emperors, to the exclusion of the uninteresting Turks, their usurpers and destroyers.

But this would not be fair. In treating of a nation, however lightly—and I do not presume to do more than present sketches of the past and present—all sides of the national history and character must be presented, however inadequately. It is therefore in this sense that I commence my narrative of the domestic life of the Sultans of our day.

Abdul Medjid died after the unusually long reign of twenty-two years. It was unusual also that he should have died in his bed, and that his nephew and successor Abdul Aziz should have girded himself with the sword of Othman (in the

approved fashion) without massacre, bowstring, or revolution.

Like the young Nero, the youth of Aziz was blameless. He was affable, handsome, and, for a prince, industrious. It was he who inaugurated the midnight Councils of State held at the Seraskierate, at which he presided, and the lamps which illuminated that white and ugly building announced to his subjects that the Commander of the Faithful himself was occupied with affairs of State. When in his retirement, basking in the sun at that most picturesque kiosk of Beicos, opposite Therapia, with its dark umbrageous woods, mounting from the water's edge in a succession of shadowy terraces—all men spoke well of him. Unlike his voluptuous uncle Hamid, who cultivated a harem stocked with beauties from all the towns of Asia, Aziz at that time acknowledged but one legal wife.

At Bairam, when it is the custom for the Valideh to present her son with a new slave of surpassing beauty, Aziz passed on the dangerous temptress to his wife, to serve her in the harem.

Schools were erected by him near each mosque, and gratuitous instruction was provided also for his Greek, Armenian, and even Jewish subjects.

All this done under the supervision of two of the most excellent and distinguished

statesmen Turkey ever possessed, Ali Pasha and the great legislator and *littérateur* Fuad Pasha, whom I once had the honour to meet at Nice shortly before his death.

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It was now that the Turkish national costume, which is to be seen in that curious exhibition at the top of the Atmeidan, was abandoned, and the European cloth coat with a fez, convenient but commonplace, substituted for caftan and turban. The women remained indeed still veiled, but with a material so thin as to form but a mist over the well-painted face. Like those of the men, their outer garments were modified, and their *ferejeh* and *yashmak* shaped into modern-shaped cloaks over a loose *peignoir* of white or coloured satin.

In order to follow out these foreign fashions, the Sultan himself decided upon visiting Western Europe to judge with his own eyes of our modern civilisation. Fuad Pasha accompanied his master, and, wonderful to say, considering Turkish habits, the young princes also, his nephews, Murad and Hamid.

Strange to relate, these innovations met with general favour. The Sultan departed amidst a chorus of general applause. All that was most distinguished in Moslem society accompanied his yacht as far as the narrow channel of the Dardanelles.

From that day Young and Old Turkey

became rival parties in the State. In consequence of his voyage westwards to see the world, Aziz was supposed to head those who aspired for as much liberty of thought and action as was compatible with a religion founded in the desert. Fuad Pasha, Ali Pasha, and the afterwards famous Midhat were with him, also many youthful mollahs, softas, diplomats, and officials. Naturally youth in person and politics was supported by the ladies, who, though hidden in their harems and supposed to have no souls, constitute a very powerful ingredient in everything social, political, and religious at Constantinople.

The Sultana Valideh alone protested in vain against her son's departure. All she could obtain was a faithful promise to return in a month, and this promise he kept.

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Long will July 24, 1867, be remembered by all who witnessed the return of Aziz, who passed into the Bosphorus by way of the Black Sea from the Danube.

It was a brilliant summer day; the air was clear as crystal; every lovely villa, hill, valley, and ravine dark with climbing cypress; the little towns that nestle so closely along the shores of the Bosphorus, kiosks, mosques, and minarets set in gay gardens and emerald banks—glowing in a general gladness.

Salvoes of cannon rent the air from the turreted

walls of the Castle of Roumeli Hissar in Europe, answered across the narrow waters from the opposite castle of Anadoli Kavak in Asia.

As the royal yacht passed Buyukdere and Therapia, the summer residence of the European ambassadors and ministers, the *stationnaires* (steam-yachts) of the different nations—Russian, Spanish, English, French, Italian, and German—joined in a *feu de joie* until the old Mountain of Giants (so called since Jason and the Argonauts sailed by) shook as if with an earthquake, while from shore to shore rang the cry 'Padishah hin! chock Yasha!' the 'evoe' of the Greeks, the 'evviva' of the Italians, and the 'hurrah' of the British tars, echoing down in chorus to Dolma-batchke, Galata, and Stamboul.

For a moment the royal yacht 'Sultanie' stopped, and the silhouette of the Sultan, who had taken his place on the bridge, was observed as he descended on the deck to welcome the Valideh and her harem, who had come out in boats to meet him. Then the huge vessel majestically proceeded on her course, passing through fields of white surf, raising real waves on the tranquil surface of the Bosphorus.

Again the Sultan took his seat on a chair of state upon the bridge, and the Grand Vizier, oppressed with anxiety respecting important affairs of state, especially a pending revolution in Crete, then as now in perpetual commotion—approached

with that humblest of salutations, signifying by gesture the casting of the body to the earth, to find there ashes with which to sprinkle the head.

'Your Majesty is, I hope, satisfied with all you have seen?' said the Grand Vizier, after the Sultan had deigned to acknowledge his presence by a nod.

'Very much so,' is the reply. 'At least I thank Allah that I am not blinded like those European sovereigns who put faith in so damnable a faith as the Christian.'

The Grand Vizier is somewhat staggered at this unexpected reply. When Aziz had departed his opinions appeared wholly favourable to European ideas, and far from inimical to Christians.

'May I ask,' he continues, 'what most attracted your Imperial attention?'

'The European cities are well built, it is true,' was the reply, 'but there is no beauty of site, such as at Constantinople. Everyone is taken up with making money. The women are shamefully exposed at balls and receptions, hanging on the arms of strange men; the husbands are indifferent to their shame; sweet smiles are on the faces of the dancers, but their partners hold them up with the indifference of a eunuch, so potent is the effect of bad habits.'

'Your Majesty says well. European civilisation appears strange to the strict follower of Mohammed; but those same women can be good

and honest wives and mothers, and often possess the knowledge of a professor. It is a harmless vanity which leads them to try to please.'

'You call that education and civilisation,' interrupts the Sultan, 'which allows thousands of victims to die in London alone of starvation, and fills the prisons to overflowing! Are you acquainted with the statistics? All the prisons are full.'

'That is because all crimes are at once punished. With us justice is incomplete, and the criminals are allowed to escape.'

'They will not escape the justice of God,' answers the Sultan sententiously.

'I perceive,' continues Ali, 'your Majesty is not favourably impressed.'

'I am glad to have been,' is the reply, 'but I confess I earnestly desired to return to Turkey. Such feverish activity, where every hour has its occupation, is the life of a schoolboy rather than that of a sovereign. These kings are the servants of their people; we are the masters.'

'Alas! your Majesty,' murmurs the Grand Vizier, painfully disenchanted, 'it is well no one hears you.'

'Why not?' asks Aziz with an offended air. 'Cannot I say what I think? Would you desire that I should lead the frantic life of these Europeans, who spend their time and money on arts, commerce and politics, neglecting the most important occupation of man's whole life, their salvation?'

The excellent Vizier sighed ; he had hoped that his young master would have learned something of the spirit of the time—new inventions, new ideas, beneficent reforms. Not a bit of it. His next remark showed it. He had evidently returned much more prejudiced and narrow-minded than he went.

'I must allow,' continues Aziz, looking extremely handsome, 'that what most struck me was the extraordinary ugliness of the European ladies ; all, except the Empress Eugénie and the Empress of Austria, are hideous. If a sovereign marries, his wife ought to exceed all others in beauty. In Europe, on the contrary, they seem to search out the plainest ones they can find.'

At this moment the conversation was interrupted by a eunuch of the Sultana Valideh, begging her son to come to her. Not one word of State affairs had passed the Sultan's lips, and a revolution was imminent!

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Now was the moment for Ali Pasha and Fuad Pasha to interchange ideas.

'Has his Majesty touched on State affairs?' asked Fuad.

'He has not so much as mentioned them,' replied Ali, shaking his head.

'When we fall,' continued Fuad, 'Turkey will return to what it was.'

'You think Abdul Aziz will rule like his predecessors?'

'Neither more nor less. He believes that he knows as much as all Europe put together. "I have nothing to learn from these States," he says. One thing pleased him in France. Guess.'

Ali, whose face grew darker and darker as Fuad continued, shook his head.

'A woman. In England he admired the fleet. Austria and Prussia did not interest him at all. Always dwelling on the Empress of the French, he swore he would find a woman as beautiful. Ah, yes! indeed he did add that he would find a Circassian better than she.'

Here they were interrupted by a very young mollah coming up, attached to the Mosque of Dolmabatchke, so imbued with the ideas of New Turkey that he insisted on shaking their hands.

Again the Sultan appeared on the bridge of the steamer, surrounded by his officers and aides-de-camp. All stood aloof while Aziz leaned over the gilt balustrade and contemplated the vast pile of the Palace of Dolmabatchke, with walls of glittering marble, two enormous wings attached to the *corps-de-logis*, backed by the prettiest of verdant parks and hills, the summits of which carry the eye on to the commencement of the outskirts of Galata.

Before the broad white steps in front of the palace bathed by the water the royal caïque darted

across the waves, and the artillery of Tophane and Scutari opened fire from their batteries.

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Now the steamer stops and the royal caïque touches the ladder at the side. A thing of magic, this gala-boat of the Sultan—a *chef-d'œuvre*, a wonder!

Spotlessly white, with borders of rose colour and gold, it rides on the water light as a butterfly; twelve rowers, clad in white Broussa silk and scarlet fez, elevate their gold-tipped oars. At the stern a dome of crimson velvet supported on gilt colonnettes overshadows the silk divan on which the Caliph reclines. An Arab with draperies of scarlet and gold holds the helm, and a gilt eagle with outstretched wings guards the poop.

No sooner had the caïque touched the marble steps in front of the tasteless mass of the façade of Dolmabatchke, than Abdul Aziz was encircled by all the great functionaries of the empire; the Sheikh-ul-Islam, head of all the mosques, in a long white cloak and snowy turban, spreading forth his hands in solemn benediction, and the ulemas (or priests), with cloaks of green or violet, forming a hedge through which the Sultan walks into the great central hall, surmounted by a dome with massive gilt columns, windows framed in renaissance garlands and festoons, and lace-worked doors, frescoed walls, and a profusion of coloured glass—all white, fresh, gaudy, and intolerably

new, and lofty enough for a triumphant emperor to pass through. The general impression as of a palace created, like Aladdin's, in a night. Not one palace, but a series of detached blocks joined together without method or style; a mixture of Arab, Turkish, and French in ranges of façades; in a word, a great opportunity lost when this was built to replace the mystic beauties of the Old Seraglio.

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Next to Dolmabatchke, Beylerbey on the Bosphorus was the favourite abode of the Sultan Aziz. Sweetly reposing on the Asiatic shore, buried in unbroken sheets of woodlands reaching upwards to a grassy plateau, the extreme ungracefulness of the tasteless mass of marble is forgotten in the priceless beauties of the frame.

If gold and gilding, silks and mosaics, in a prodigality from which all taste is excluded, constitute the Turkish idea of a palace, then Beylerbey is complete. Of pictures and sculptures there are none, nothing but a commonplace glitter of enormous mirrors, glaring ceilings, consoles, chandeliers, and ponderous chairs.

Here the Sultan lounged with his harem in search of that perfect beauty about which his mind is so much occupied since he has seen the Empress Eugénie. All his previous convictions of wedded bliss with a single wife are blown to the winds.

He revels in his liberty, collects beautiful slaves from all quarters, and leaves the affairs of State and the revolution in Crete to the care of his Ministers, Ali, Fuad, and Midhat Pashas, who vainly endeavour to prevail on him to reform grievances, diminish the taxes, lighten the finances, and increase the naval and military stores. But although these important matters are thrown aside for the prattle of a new slave, it is not without a very decided intimation that his former political concessions were only intended to mislead his subjects and to calm an effervescence of ideas which might become dangerous.

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One evening, mounted on a satin-coated Arab —which, if there is nobility in horseflesh, might be called a patrician of the bluest blood—and attended only by one officer, Aziz rides under the terraced alleys bordering the park.

And now let us look at him as he appears, an absolutely handsome man, with a clear olive skin without a trace of colour, set off by long almond-shaped eyes under clear-lined brows. A large but perfectly-formed nose, a mouth hidden by a silky beard black as ebony, a high forehead partly concealed by a fez; not tall, but of a slight and elegant figure, set off by perfectly-tailored clothes, and a seat on horseback so easy and graceful that every movement of the noble animal seems to be his own.

The road along which he slowly proceeds is bordered by high walls inclosing massive trees opening into bosquets and vistas. Not a sound is heard, until the whisper of some voices in earnest conversation behind the wall breaks the silence. The Sultan looks sharply up, at first suspiciously (to all sultans the dread of assassination is present, it is so unusual to die a natural death). But soon the glance melts into something approaching to a smile. Outward demonstrations are no more permitted to a Commander of the Faithful out of the harem than to a Byzantine emperor, and Aziz is actually riding on the high road. He turns his head, however, in the direction of the voices, listens, and then at once enters a gate of the park close at hand.

That he had heard something which had greatly pleased him was evident from the satisfaction expressed in his face. What it was was his secret; his attendant was too far off to guess.

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The month was September, the time when those delicious golden grapes, each as big as a plum, ripen in the sunny sides of the fields sloping towards the Bosphorus. Scarce a day passes without caïques bringing entire harems to the shore, the women climbing up the heights to establish themselves under a wide-spreading sycamore, or an ash—behind a trellis wall, or an ancestral oak, for the consumption of the mid-

day meal. Well-filled baskets are placed on the ground, a carpet is spread, the ladies remove their veils or yashmaks and smoke their cigarettes; the children rock themselves in swings improvised on the branches until the meal is ready; then all fall to, finishing by the sacramental cup of Mocha, without which life could not be endured.

There they sit, squatting on the ground, until the rising moon sheets itself in silver on the water. The khanoum and her ladies—close by her husband, very likely with *his* friends, but he not daring to turn so much as a glance in the direction of his women, while they laugh and talk and joke in shrill voices distinctly heard, but never noticed; to do so would be the height of bad manners.

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It was twilight on a lovely autumn day when the Valideh Sultana; the Sultana, wife of Abdul Aziz, who had very much ceased to be supreme in his affection; his aunt and two nieces, daughters of the late Sultan, were seated round a lordly plateau of silver, covered by an infinite number of dishes—a *goûter* prepared by the imperial cooks. A Circassian slave called Mihri Hanoum, a favourite with the Valideh, had just finished singing a Turkish song, which she accompanied on the zither, and was receiving the compliments of the princesses.

As they ceased speaking, Mihri modestly

disappeared into the shade hand-in-hand with a young girl, her friend, as dark as Mihri was fair, also attached to the harem of the Sultana-mother.

Both were unveiled, and as they sat on a mound of rising ground, their white *ferejehs* revealing the faint outlines of their slight figures, they looked like nymphs or dryads evoked from the gloom of the woods.

'Yes,' sighed Mihri, 'I am very unhappy. The Sultan—oh! how beautiful he is!—I love him! I dare not raise my eyes to him, but when he comes into the harem my heart beats so I cannot breathe. Look!' seizing her friend's hand, 'you have a lover, he will marry you and give you a home. What will be my fate? I have dared to look too high.'

'But you see him every day; at least take advantage of it,' whispered the other; 'put yourself in his way.'

'What can I do? We are so many slaves in the harem, all young and all good-looking, they choose us for that. The Sultan distinguishes no one. Why should he notice me?'

Little did she guess who was listening to her. A pair of dark eyes on the other side of a *treillage* of green branches were riveted upon her. To whom they belonged is a secret, but the eyes saw all that the darkness permitted—the girlish charm of the speaker, her unveiled face, pale in the

moonlight, and the ears drank in her passionate words whispered like a sigh to the night-breeze.

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Abdul Aziz, who came by degrees to give himself no more concern about his kingdom than if he had been a simple bey come to Constantinople to enjoy himself—was seated, so the story goes, in one of those elegant gilded erections of wood like a glorified bird-cage, called a kiosk, embowered by flowering plants and covered by creepers, such as mark every recess or vista, sheltered spot, or sunny space in the imperial gardens. Now a kiosk may be as large as a house, or even as a palace—when the German Emperor visited the Sultan he was lodged in a kiosk—or as small as a mere garden arbour. Whatever their size all are kiosks, and we have no name to correspond with it. If one kiosk be too small, two will serve the purpose. The Turks, spite of their treacherous climate, live much in the open air, and love to escape from the restriction of encircling walls into these *al fresco* dwellings.

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The twilight was darkening into night. The rural refection of the sultanas, who were frequently in the habit of taking their meals seated beneath the shade of the trees in the park, was known to the Sultan, who had dismounted and wandered on attended by his favourite eunuch, two black slaves hovering in the distance.

Like most Eastern potentates with nothing to do, he deeply interested himself in the small gaieties of the Court, specially on this lovely night. Sweet perfumes rose up from the earth mingled with fresh breezes from the sea ; and the glistening stars, reflected beneath, made, as it were, another heaven in the waters, which softly lapped upon the shore.

Nothing could be more perfect than this poetic nature. But it was a nature inanimate and silent, and when the delicate modulations of a soft young voice rose in the darkness, giving utterance to the long-drawn cadences of an amorous ditty, little did the singer imagine who was listening as she trilled out her notes to the circle of the sultanas. Still less did she imagine the effect she was producing. Spell-bound sat Aziz, until she had ceased. Then when Mihri, her arm round her friend's neck, breathed in a passionate whisper, 'I love him ; he will never know it ; he does not notice me,' a genuine quickening of the pulse stirred the habitual phlegm proper to the Sultan.

Perhaps it was the moon, ever favourable to lovers with its dim radiance ; perhaps it was the effect of the plaintive music which softened him ; but, at all events, in a low tone he at once inquired of the eunuch who never left him, 'Who was singing?'

'Doubtless some slave of the Valideh Sultana,' was the reply.

'Go,' said the Sultan, 'and call her here. Her voice is sweet. I should like to hear her again.'

By this time Mihri was not alone, but sat surrounded by her companions, who gathered round to twine a garland of flowers on her head.

'What chance brings you here, Obon Effendi?' cried one of the girls, addressing the eunuch, reputed as more good-natured than his fellows. 'Come and sit by me, and hear Mihri sing.'

'It sounds better at a distance,' answered the wily Arab.

'That is not true,' said a pert little slave, laughing.

'I say it is,' replied the eunuch, 'and to prove it, I am going to take Mihri away; she shall sing out of the wood, and you can judge of the effect.'

'Agreed, agreed,' cried the girls, laughing. Taking Mihri by the hand, the eunuch disappeared in the direction of the kiosk.

'Where are you taking me?' asked the Circassian, alarmed at the solitude.

'The Sultan commands me to bring you,' is the answer. 'He desires to hear another song. Sing as well as you can, now or never,' after which sage advice he is silent until they reach the kiosk. 'Here is our little nightingale, Highness,' said he, inclining himself to the earth as he stands with Mihri on the threshold of the arbour. 'I have caught her in the wood.'

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The glance which the Sultan cast at Mihri when brought to him, timidly standing by the door, sent all the blood dancing through her veins. She trembled, and would have fallen, but for the support of the eunuch.

'Approach, my child,' said Aziz, in tones of gentleness itself. 'Fear nothing. Sit down, and sing to me. Place a cushion for her,' he added to the eunuch.

Down sank poor Mihri, who seemed to be moving in a dream. Pale and trembling, her fingers can hardly hold the little metal thimbles with which the cords of the zither are touched. When she tried to sing her voice was gone, and she burst into a passion of tears.

All this extremely gratified the Sultan, and the eunuch, ever ready to watch his master, whispered into his ear: 'How much she loves you.' Again the ardent glance of the Sultan burst, as it were, into the soul of Mihri, as the sun at noon bursts forth and gives strength to the flowers to expand.

She raised her head, her courage came, and seizing the zither she sang as she had never done before.

The Sultan, lying back on the embroidered cushions of a divan, contemplated her with an air of perfect satisfaction. He warmly applauds her singing, and taking a magnificent diamond ring from his finger places it on her own.

At night, when the Bash Kadine called together her brood, Mihri was missing. Her bed had not been spread by the side of her companions. The kadine is furious. What had become of her? She ran from hall to hall in the selamlik inquiring of everyone. At last she met one of the Sultan's eunuchs, to whom she addresses the same question.

The yellow-faced official smiled: 'Give yourself no trouble, kadine; the khanoum is with the Sultan.'.

And thus it came about that the Circassian became a Sultana.

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It was at Beylerbey that Abdul Aziz received the Empress Eugénie, before her fall, in that one long gala of triumph from Constantinople to Egypt. Poor beautiful Empress with the saint-like eyes!

The Golden Horn and the Bosphorus had never looked so splendid; flags, pennons, and banners floated everywhere; from the point of Galata to the sombre gardens of the Old Seraglio, at Scutari and Dolmabatchke, the mosques of Ahmed and St. Sophia, and on both sides of the Bosphorus down to Beylerbey and the Castle of Roumeli Hissar—on every steamer that passes, on every caïque, innumerable as they are.

The whole population is afoot, crowds assembled at every pier, and villagers to be reckoned by thousands lining every bank.

At the gilded gates of the villas which line the banks of the Asiatic shore the slaves are assembled, and at the windows of the harems the veiled ladies, opera-glass in hand, sweep the horizon, vying with each other in catching the first glimpse of the imperial beauty.

Never before had an empress visited an Eastern potentate. The news had penetrated to the obscurest harem in Stamboul, and curiosity has driven out every creature.

The preparations made by the Sultan for this beautiful sovereign whom he so ardently admired were astounding in their magnificence.

The Palace of Beylerbey was entirely refurnished, and by a delicate attention the apartments of the Empress were an exact copy of those of the Tuileries.

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As the imperial vessel 'l'Aigle' steamed into the archipelago of the Sea of Marmora, salvoes of artillery thundered on all sides, and a whole squadron of advancing steamers formed an escort, each steamer bearing on the poop a silken tricolour studded with the imperial bees.

In the broad reach up the Bosphorus, before the palace, under the shadow of the grand old battlements of the Conqueror's castle mounting the hill in scarp and counterscarp, the gallant Sultan was waiting in his gilded caïque. Then, as the imperial vessel followed by its convoy

ploughed through the tranquil water in its rapid course, sending frothy waves upon the shore on either hand, the paddles were suddenly reversed, and Abdul Aziz, in the uniform of a French maréchal, passed at once to the deck between lines of Turkish launches filled with musicians who struck up 'Partant pour la Syrie' as he conducted the Empress to his caïque.

This lovely lady with the immortal eyes—destined to live for ever in painting and in sculpture, so perfectly beautiful that her supremacy was never questioned—dressed in pure white, received these attentions with that royal grace which even more than her beauty constituted her greatest charm.

In the great halls of the palace all the ambassadors and ministers accredited to the Porte were assembled to welcome her, and when, led by Abdul Aziz, she took her place on the throne to receive their congratulations, even Cleopatra herself, floating in her golden galley on the Cydnus, the East at her feet, could not have been more triumphant. After the visits of ceremony to the Sultana Valideh and the chief Sultana, mother of his son Youssouf Effendi (she who was permanently to have satisfied his vagrant heart), the Empress is rowed across to the Palace of Cheragan, the Sultan's last costly folly in the way of building, a heavy and incongruous mixture of many styles, wrought in red and green marble,

with gilded gates, fountains, painted galleries, latticed corridors, and majolica walls.

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A state visit to Sultana Mihri, our Circassian friend, ever more and more adored by the Sultan, who indulged her smallest whim, was the next event in the imperial programme, Mihri receiving her imperial visitor in a parure of pearls and emeralds estimated at six million francs; her slaves, who formed an avenue from the entrance of the harem to her saloon, glittering, like their mistress, with priceless jewels.

As the Empress is invited to supper, two tables are prepared in different apartments, one *à la* Frank served on Sèvres porcelain and Bohemian glass; the other *à la* Turque on an immense plateau of chiselled silver placed on a low table covered with embroidered Broussa silk and enamelled plates set with gems.

When asked to make her choice by Mihri, the Empress naturally selects the Turkish service, and takes her place beside her, the Turkish ladies placing themselves at the European table, and for the first time drinking the health of the Empress in champagne.

Singing and dancing by the slaves of the harem pass the time for these ladies who have no language in common, and can only speak by the mouth of a female interpreter, Madame Miran Bey; but when the Empress, with her

exquisite grace, raises to her lips a scented cigarette, nothing can exceed the general satisfaction.

At ten o'clock the Sultan is announced. Pleased at the compliment to his favourite Mihri, he comes in the best of tempers. At his appearance all the sultanas fling themselves on the ground and kiss whatever portion of his dress they can secure. Though lapped in luxury, what are they but slaves?

Then he advances and exchanges compliments with the Empress, whose natural dignity no one who has ever approached her can forget.

'Ladies,' says Abdul Aziz, after having conversed with her some minutes, turning to Mihri and her gay band of slaves, 'the Empress condescends to tell me that she finds the Turkish ladies the most charming in the world. She says the fire of their eyes exceeds the lustre of their jewels'—a sentiment received by Mihri with a profound obeisance.

Then came sherbet and coffee, brought in by the most beautiful among the slaves, and the evening concludes by the Sultan himself conducting the Empress to her caïque.

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And now we come upon the stormy times which preface the death of Aziz.

The disastrous war of the Herzegovina and the intricate political conspiracies, foreign and

domestic, which brought about the catastrophe are out of my limited province.

For years Aziz obstinately refused to understand the danger in which he stood from the ever-increasing demands of the progressive party of Young Turkey and the general disgust at his reckless extravagance.

In vain Midhat Pasha, who headed the reformers (not without accusations of being a traitor) endeavoured to open his eyes. Midhat was dismissed, as had been Ali and his colleagues. Fuad Pasha was dead. These the only statesmen who might have stemmed the torrent of rising rebellion, were removed.

The new Vizier, Mahmoud Pasha, a *protégé* of the harem, as he had married a sister of the Sultan, flattered and deceived him. Perhaps he deceived himself, for he was but a creature of Russia, and in all times Russian policy aims at the annihilation of Turkey.

At all events the enormous expenditure of the Sultan, who ceaselessly squandered the imperial revenues, was ruining not only the State and beggaring the army, but seriously affecting public credit.

To please his new favourite Mihri incredible sums were lavished upon the harem. In vain was he implored to consider the crying wants of the provinces, to increase the defences and the artillery. In vain—for Mihri, in order to show her power,

had set her heart upon erecting on the Bosphorus a palace more costly than Dolmabatchke, and at most lavish expense the palace was built and furnished.

Then the Sultana Valideh, his mother, a rabid Turcophile, advised him to banish all the troublesome reformers forming the party of Young Turkey, and it was done.

For four years the once popular and affable Aziz shut himself up at Dolmabatchke, and was only visible to his subjects on Fridays when on the way to the mosque, which almost touches the palace walls.

He was curiously changed—not a feature of the once handsome Padishah remained. Swollen to double his former size, he moved heavily. His once raven hair and beard were white, and *ennui* and suspicion gave to his sallow face an expression of contemptuous apathy.

The fat Vizier Mahmoud, as obese as his master, vainly sought to distract him by falsifying and concealing everything that did not please him.

'Majesty,' says Mahmoud, seated on a divan, opposite the arm-chair occupied by the Sultan, 'why are you so sad? Your reign is the most glorious of the descendants of Omar. Russia favours you, Constantinople flourishes, Pera is rebuilt, Europe believes in us. What would you have more, Sire?'

Abdul Aziz, leaning back in his chair, suddenly raises himself. 'You are a faithful friend and servant, Mahmoud. You try to reassure me. But I know that the party of the reformers is against me to a man. They want my nephew Murad. Midhat is my enemy.'

'Believe me, Sire, Young Turkey is as yet feeble,' replies the Vizier with a smile. 'Much time must elapse before their dreams are realised. I assure your Majesty you have nothing to fear from that rebel Midhat while I continue in power. But if you are persuaded to dismiss me, I will answer *for nothing*.'

This was precisely what every Vizier had said so many times, *Après moi, le déluge*. The Sultan knew it well, and he shuddered.

Then he rises and, taking a few turns up and down the apartment, directs a suspicious glance towards the satin hangings behind which the eunuchs squatted in a corner, on Persian carpets, more like watch-dogs than human beings.

Turning towards Mahmoud, who had risen too, he whispers into his ear: 'It is not only Young Turkey and Midhat I dread, but the Sultana Mihri; her melancholy presentiments depress me beyond words.'

'Perhaps it is caused by the state of her Highness' health.'

'No, Mahmoud, the Sultana is a woman of courage and judgment, but her sleep is troubled

with the most horrible dreams. Blood, murder, and assassination haunt her. She dare not be a moment alone. This troubles me greatly. I wish her to have change, but she refuses to leave me. "Coming dangers menace you more than me," she says; "I will not go."'

'No wonder your Majesty's spirits are depressed. Seek other distractions in your harem and leave the Sultana to her visions.' The Sultan frowned and Mahmoud was silent.

For a Turk to allude to his harem under any conditions, even to his dearest friend, is deemed an indelicacy and breach of etiquette. How sorely must the Sultan have suffered before he could thus take his minister into his confidence on the forbidden subject!

Perhaps the Grand Vizier would not have been equally confident of his power in the midst of a state of affairs so dangerous, of which he was perfectly cognisant, however he might deceive his master, had he not been so powerfully supported by the Russian ambassador, General Ignatieff. A sudden rebellion, a domestic conspiracy in favour of Murad, such as so often broods unsuspected in the recesses of the harem, might give Constantinople into the hands of Russia. The chances were favourable; at any moment open rebellion might break out, specially if the weak and inefficient Mahmoud remained at his post.

Then came the massacre of the French and Prussian consuls at Salonica, followed by the demand of the ambassadors for the summary punishment of the assassins.

A day or two after, on the Friday, thousands of the popular party and the softas (students) assembled on the vast marble terrace before Dolmabatchke in order to present a petition, expecting to see the Sultan pass on his way to the mosque. But these ardent young spirits waited in vain. The Sultan, contrary to all custom and precedent in the annals of the Ottoman dynasty, did not appear. That the successor of the Prophet, the Commander of the Faithful, the great High Priest of Islam, should absent himself from the service of his faith on a Friday was incredible. Is he absent? Was he ill, dying? No one knew; but the truth was that, undeceived at length as to the bias of his people, and trembling for his life, he was watching the crowd from the shrouded galleries of the harem.

But the softas, the spokesmen of the reforming party of Young Turkey, were not thus to be baffled. Next day they spread themselves about in the European quarters of Pera and Galata, where arms were to be purchased.

All that they could lay hands on were secured, and there was great alarm in the city. Some of the ambassadors as a measure of precaution sent

their valuables on board the *stationnaires*, and at Dolmabatchke the sentinels were doubled.

'We desire to see the Sultan,' is the cry when, with one voice, they press against the gilt railings of the palace, in answer to the aide-de-camp Tcherkess Hassan, known as 'the Circassian,' brother of Mihri, who was sent out to parley with them.

'His Majesty is in the harem; he is indisposed. He desires that his faithful people should express their desires to me.'

'We do not want you,' is the answer. 'It is his Majesty we are come to see.'

'If his Majesty's health render an interview impossible, what do you desire?'

The immediate dismissal of the Grand Vizier Mahmoud and of the Scherif-ul-Islam.'

'I will inform his Majesty and take his orders,' is the answer, and Hassan re-enters the palace.

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'Effendis,' says Hassan, reappearing at the gates after a brief delay, 'his Majesty is deeply touched with the proof of confidence you place in him. It is his pleasure in no measure to resist the desire of his faithful people. He commands you at once to proceed to the Sublime Porte. The firman you demand will follow you to the Seraskierate,' at which there is much noisy rejoicing and loud cries of 'Padishah him chock yasha!'

A council of new ministers was immediately called at Dolmabatchke, spite of the violent opposition of the harem ; the Valideh Sultana specially insisting on the folly of listening to the insurgents, and dismissing so near a relative as Mahmoud at such a moment. But this council is dismissed as hastily as it was summoned.

The new ministers, Mehemet Ruchti Pasha, Redif Pasha, and Hussein Avni Pasha, find the Sultan in a very bad humour. He sits almost concealed in an arm-chair, nervously twisting a prayer-chaplet of amber beads in his hand. His eyes are fixed and heavy, his lips drawn and bloodless.

Three separate series of profound salutations, in which figuratively earth is cast upon their heads, fail to rouse him. Then the ministers stood immovable in a circle with folded arms, an attitude at once humble and expectative, as waiting on his pleasure. After a time the aghas, or officials on service, place chairs, and these much-tried gentlemen sit on the edges, humbly soliciting the Sultan's attention.

'What news from the army?' he asks at last abruptly.

'Sire,' answers the Grand Vizier, 'your troops have shown great courage, but the Herzegovina is full of rocks and passes where they fall before invisible enemies.'

'Dogs of Christians,' mutters Aziz—a senti-

ment warmly responded to by Hussein Avni and the rest.

'And what other disaster have you come to announce?' again asks the Sultan with a bitter smile.

'Sire,' is the reply of the Grand Vizier, 'your Majesty is well aware of the state of the finances; our credit is compromised, commerce languishes, and misery——'

'Ah! that reminds me,' interrupts the Sultan with an affected air of indifference, harder to deal with than violent opposition. 'I am indeed the poorest among sovereigns. Do you expect to receive any revenues this week, Vizier?' (with a sardonic smile).

'Yes, sire,' answers the Grand Vizier, hesitating, suspicious of what was to follow, 'some of the most important of the empire.'

'Then you will not fail to pay me the interest on my coupons in the State Banks, a mere bagatelle. I should never have invested the money had not Mahmoud assured me that I should be regularly paid.'

Ruchti Pasha started from his chair. 'Majesty, the money is destined for the payment of our troops in the Herzegovina.'

'But I want it,' answers the Sultan with the same expression of perfect indifference.

'Yes, Sire, I understand, but the army is starving, the wounded require care, the ambu-

lances are still here for want of funds to send them.'

'These are miserable pretexts,' the Sultan replies, quite unmoved.

'Believe me, sire,' responds the Grand Vizier, 'in the general state of discontent it is absolutely needful to supply the army.'

A haughty look spreads over the Sultan's face, and he is about to speak when Hussein Avni rises.

'Sire, we are come here on most urgent business. It is not only war on the frontier, but civil war at home. Twenty thousand Mussulmans will deluge Stamboul in blood if their conditions are not complied with.'

'What more?' cries the Sultan, rising to his feet with such a menace in his eyes that the Grand Vizier drew back, but Redif Pasha stands firm.

'Here is the list of the changes demanded, Majesty,' and he draws out a long paper, and respectfully places it in the Sultan's hands.

Abdul Aziz, with a hasty glance, ran his eyes down the page, which contained the name of every *protégé* of the late Vizier.

'Is this all?' he asks in a tone of bitterest irony, returning the paper.

'Yes, sire,'

'Well, then, I refuse; I will teach my subjects their duty. Not one in this list shall be dismissed —*not one*,' raising his voice until it echoes through the hall.

The ministers, aghast, exchange glances of absolute terror.

'But, Majesty,' cries the Grand Vizier, throwing himself at the Sultan's feet, 'it must be done. These men cannot remain. It is needful for the actual existence of the Government,' and Hussein Avni Pasha and all the others present join in with earnest supplications.

'Go on, Effendi, go on,' cries Abdul in a voice of fury, 'your Sultan is listening. When will you cease to impose your will on him? By Allah! do you think I will bear this tyranny for ever?'

'Sire, forgive us; it is for the good of the empire.'

'The empire? It is mine. I alone am the judge. It is you—*you* who are responsible. Where and when has a Padishah yielded to the commands of rebels? Leave me, traitors!' And stepping forward he raised his hand and points significantly to the door. All this spoken in a voice so loud that he is distinctly audible in the adjoining chamber to the officers and eunuchs assembled there.

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There had long been vague reports of the dethronement of Aziz, and the accession of Murad, his nephew, to the throne. No regular party had as yet been formed, although the reforming softas were favourable to the change.

Murad was looked on as altogether modern, and as sharing their ideas; but after the summary dismissal of the Grand Vizier and the ministers, the impossibility of carrying out any measure of government was apparent.

Now the manner in which this dilemma was solved is very characteristic. The Turk is above all pious, according to his lights, and the Sultan is the pope or high priest of his religion. Next to him, in case of absence or death, the Sheikh-ul-Islam takes his place. To the Sheikh-ul-Islam, a well-known reformer, were now submitted by a trusty softa two sealed questions—

'When a Sultan becomes morally incapable of reigning, is it lawful to depose him?

'When a Sultan wastes the revenues and ruins his people for his amusement, is it lawful to put him away?'

The answer received was thus worded :—

'With the aid of Allah, May 29, 1293 of the Hegira. Yes; a Sultan can be dethroned if he ruins his country by his obstinacy and extravagance. A Sultan should be the father of his people, not their tyrant. Allah forgive him. He alone is great and manifest.

'H. AIRI VULLAH.'

Murad Effendi lived at that time in the island of Prinkipo, one of the charming group of the Prince's Islands, a very paradise of pastoral beauty

in the Sea of Marmora, near the Asiatic coast, about an hour's distance from Scutari.

Nothing could be more simple and unpretending than his life. At one time he was said to have indulged in habits of intemperance, but was now supposed to have overcome them. He spent his time visiting his neighbours, principally Greeks, who lived in the villas near, loved music and the Italian language, amused himself with masters for both, received his friends, and charmed everyone by his amiable manners.

But since Young Turkey had become a powerful party in Stamboul, Murad had been removed to a bleak, ugly kiosk adjoining the cemetery above Scutari, deprived of his companions and his masters, and left a prey to the morbid melancholy of his family and those nervous terrors for his life common to heirs presumptive in Turkey.

As time went on and the reformers of Young Turkey formed themselves into a powerful party, Murad's life became more and more wretched, so much so that he felt inclined to curse his partisans and to dread and detest every effort made in his favour.

The opinion of the Sheikh-ul-Islam was declared on May 29, 1876. On the afternoon of that day Murad, according to one account, was as usual engaged in a melancholy game of tric-trac-taoli with a eunuch of his harem.

As if some presentiment stirred his fancy, he was so absent and preoccupied that he forgot to put down his counters and continue the game. His eyes rested constantly, as if endeavouring to read their thoughts, on two mollahs, who were smoking their long pipes in a corner of the room.

These came from without, and knew all that was passing; but everyone was forbidden to speak of politics to him, and he was absolutely ignorant of the threatened rebellion in Constantinople.

When at last he roused himself he was conscious of some unusual stir outside. Doors banged, footsteps were heard, and then a voice pitched in a high tone reached his ear.

Without knowing why he felt so much excited, he asked what this meant.

'Some row between your servants and the slaves, Highness,' is the reply.

'But may I not know what it is?' returns Murad sharply.

'Certainly, your Highness. It is only your Highness's tailor who wants to see you. He has brought some patterns to show you, and the aghas on guard will not let him pass.'

'I suppose I must give up dressing myself soon,' replies the Prince with a sigh. 'Let him come in,' to the eunuch.

But the tailor, who appeared to be in a great hurry, is already in the room. Murad looked

up, their eyes meet, and he recognises one of the most devoted of his adherents.

With extraordinary self-command he receives the paper of patterns, and advances to the window, apparently the better to examine them, in reality to read a paper hidden in the packet. These were the words: '*To-morrow you will be Sultan.*—Signed by MEHEMET RUCHTI, Grand Vizier.'

So great is Murad's agitation that he has great difficulty in remaining on his feet, and is forced to support himself by leaning against the window. At a sign to the eunuch he contrives to get the mollahs sent into the next room; then he turns and whispers,—

'Ah! dear Saladhin, it is you? What has happened? Am I to be free?'

'Yes, Highness, indeed. To-morrow will be a day of vengeance for all who love you.'

'And you also, dear Saladhin, have suffered for my sake. I have heard this, though so little reaches me here.'

'I have no time to think of myself, Highness,' is Saladhin's reply. 'Every moment is precious. May long years of prosperity make up for all you have endured.'

'And the Sultan?' This question is spoken so low it is hardly audible.

'He will be deposed, exiled.'

'No, not exiled. Above all, guard his life as

you would my own. My reign shall not be stained with blood. I forgive him all he has done. Remember, I bear him no grudge.' Murad can say no more.

This is one account, but I am bound to say another version represents this scene as taking place at the Palace, and that Murad, shrinking from the risk of any acquiescence, was, by the help of some attendants, securely smuggled away by Hussein Avni, Minister of War, at the head of two squadrons of horse, and conveyed to the Seraskierate.

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There is something awful to the mind of the spectators in the gradual development of a mimic drama upon a mimic stage, as step by step the tragic action leads on to the catastrophe. How much more terrible when the fate of a sovereign and a throne, a kingdom and a people, unrolls itself before our eyes in that silent march of inexorable fate which conducts to death or victory!

The day passed in perfect calm. No sign of the storm which was darkening the political world appeared on the outward horizon. The sun shone brightly, the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn were alive with steamers and caïques. These went and came in their ordinary business, and many and many a harem turned out to enjoy the day at the Sweet Waters of

Europe or Asia. But for an occasional aide-de-camp or messenger galloping across the wooden bridges which divide Stamboul from Pera, the most penetrating eye could observe nothing unusual.

But under this apparent tranquillity the flood-gates of rebellion were unloosed. While the Sultan was maturing a signal vengeance on what he insisted on considering the insolent insubordination of his Divan, secret orders were despatched by the Grand Vizier to two large transport vessels anchored in the Golden Horn, opposite the Arsenal, for the fires to be prepared for immediate departure, and a sealed packet was sent to the commander which was only to be opened when twenty miles at sea.

Another secret order from the Minister of War ordered the Commander of the Royal Guard, known to be devoted to Abdul Aziz, immediately to embark his soldiers on board the transports, without more precise explanation; which he did not fail to do in the belief he was obeying the command of the Sultan.

At ten o'clock that evening the drawbridge of Galata was opened and the transport vessels left the port, the captains totally unsuspicious that they were involuntarily carrying out the chief move in a conspiracy to deprive Abdul Aziz of the throne.

It is popularly believed that it was the

decision and courage of Midhat Pasha which placed Murad on the throne. In such a crisis it would be difficult, if not impossible, to know what really took place. But at the secret council held at the Seraskierate, after the interview with Abdul Aziz at Dolmabatchke, it was certainly *his* voice which gave the word of command to his colleagues.

'Prompt measures may prevent bloodshed,' were his words. 'We must be resolute and swift. Let those who would follow my counsels signify it.' Every hand was raised. 'Listen: the muezzin is sounding the hour of evening prayer. Before he announces the break of day Abdul Aziz must have ceased to reign.' Spite of all the intricacies of the conspiracy in which they had been so long engaged, this sudden call to action staggered his colleagues.

'The plan is bold,' continued Midhat, 'but our success and our lives depend on it. Each one of us has his part assigned in this plot—difficult, I own—to rid Turkey of a tyrant.'

Then the great minister proceeded to detail his plan.

Murad was to be brought to the Seraskierate with a regiment of infantry, and the Greek and Armenian patriarchs were to furnish a contingent of rayahs to unite with the conspirators to proclaim him Sultan. The Sheikh-ul-Islam was also to be present, and Redif Pasha, the

President of the Council, was at the same time to present himself at the barracks of Dolmabatchke and place the general and officers under arrest, giving the command to Salaheddin Bey, who was to invest the palace. The same precautions were to be taken by the Minister of Marine, and the officers on the ironclads anchored before Dolmabatchke were to be replaced by others devoted to the cause.

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It was midnight before Salaheddin Bey and Redif Pasha, with a small detachment of troops, entered the barracks of Dolmabatchke, situated behind the palace, towards the hill. The officers, seeing the uniform of the aide-de-camp of the Minister of War, hastened to receive them with the utmost respect. In their midst, Redif, with the coolness of real courage, stood forth and boldly displayed the order of the Council to the officer in command.

No opposition was offered. The personal presence of the Minister of War was sufficient justification. The general in command was already in bed. Little did he dream that four soldiers of the conspirators were keeping guard outside his door, and that his officers were replaced by others who had received their orders from the Seraskier.

Some minutes later, the troops who had accompanied them from Constantinople were

massed in the court of the barracks. Salaheddin, a revolver hidden under his sleeve, followed by some officers, also armed, carefully examined one by one the faces of all the soldiers, to assure himself that no traitor was among them.

'You see these arms,' he said, suddenly displaying the revolver; 'you have sworn fidelity to us; one word and you are dead. Allah and your country call on you to be silent.'

Then Redif Pasha, a drawn sword in his hand, followed by these soldiers, stole noiselessly along the road which led to the palace. All lay in absolute repose. The balmy breezes of a night in May fanned the leaves; lights were visible in the ironclads anchored alongside the quay, but not the faintest ray was discernible in the harem; in the palace all slept or seemed to sleep.

At the gilded gateway leading into the courtyard the sentinel's challenge sounded loud in the universal stillness, but a pistol to his throat and the password silenced him. Another soldier noiselessly took his place, and the sentinel was placed in the middle of the battalion. Each time the same manœuvre was repeated at the three gates of entrance, and the battalion, now stationed round the palace, guarded every issue.

It is said that the Sultan's troops acted in ignorance of treason, and that, seeing the officers of the Minister of War, they imagined that they were obeying his secret orders. Redif Pasha, whose

coolness had never for a moment failed, reserved to himself the place of danger at the entrance to the harem, which opened towards the Bosphorus. Giving his last orders, he entered softly with a pass-key, followed by his guards. But the Arab slaves, aroused by the slightest noise, instantly were upon them. 'What do you want? Who are you?' demanded the gruff voice of one of the eunuchs, precipitating himself from the divan on which he had lain.

'I am Redif Pasha, President of the Council of War,' replied the general with an untroubled voice. 'I am come to speak to the Sultan on affairs of the highest importance. Go and inform the Kislar Agha (chief eunuch) that he must come down instantly and conduct me to his Majesty.'

'But, Excellency, at this hour everyone is asleep in the harem.'

'Go, and do as I command you. It is an affair of State.'

The commanding air and manner with which the words were spoken so impressed the eunuch that he at once obeyed. Ten minutes passed before the Kislar Agha appeared, a man of great height and size, and of immense strength, with a hideous misshapen countenance.

'Ah, Redif Pasha Effendi,' said he, 'it is you. What do you mean by waking us up in the middle of the night? By Allah! I thought twice before I got up.'

'You did well not to think more,' answered the general roughly, scanning the hideous mass of humanity before him, 'else my officers would have waked you more roughly still. Listen, fellow; go and tell the Sultan I must see him at once.'

'Are you mad, General Pasha? I wake his Highness at this hour?'

'Yes, wake him, villain, and in more senses than one. Look here, eunuch, do you understand this?' and he opened the outer door, behind which they had been standing, and displayed the battalion of troops which surrounded the palace.

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'You will not kill his Majesty?' whimpered the eunuch, his teeth chattering in his head as he takes a torch in his trembling hands to light the general up the grand staircase.

'I am not an assassin,' is the answer.

Redif and his soldiers follow step by step up the magnificent marble stairs leading to the first story, then pass through several splendid halls to the curtained entrance of Abdul Aziz's apartments.

'I dare not enter. Have mercy on me, Excellency!' cries the terrified giant.

The general drew out his revolver, and the door is instantly opened.

'At least let me apprise him,' urges the eunuch; 'his Majesty is not alone; and the curtain fell upon the figure of the eunuch. After a few minutes, Aziz himself, half-dressed, stands on the

threshold. The expression of his face is terrible. Even at this moment of humiliation the dignity of outraged majesty was stamped on every feature.

'Why are you here, Redif? Explain quickly.'

'Your Majesty sent for the Grand Vizier to-day,' is the answer, as the general bows to the ground. 'He could not come, being engaged on important affairs of state; therefore I am here.'

'If that is all you have to say, you might have waited till the morning,' replies Aziz haughtily.

'If it were only as the bearer of the Grand Vizier's excuses, I should certainly not have presumed to disturb your Majesty's slumbers,' replies Redif in a more submissive tone. 'But I am the messenger of much more important matters.'

'Speak, Effendi, and do not keep me here all night. Is some conspiracy afloat?'

'Precisely. Your Majesty's acumen is perfect.'

'Then I am to understand that you, one of the ministers I drove from my presence, are chosen to announce to me that I have been betrayed.'

'Your Majesty spares me an unwelcome task: such is the intelligence of which I am the bearer.' All this is spoken by Redif Pasha with perfect *sang-froid*, as though the conversation turned on ordinary topics.

'Betrayed? By whom? How? When?' cries the Sultan, in a voice that sounded loud through the halls of the sleeping harem.

'Explain yourself, Redif Pasha. It is not the first time I have ordered you from my presence.'

'I have not forgotten it, Highness, nor have my colleagues,' answers the general; 'and if I have presumed to return, it is to announce to you that your nephew is Sultan.'

'My nephew!' cries Abdul, eagerly catching at the paper which Redif offered him, a sardonic smile on his lips and again bowing to the ground.

The face of Abdul Aziz grew livid as he reads, the paper trembling in his hand. Then in an outbreak of uncontrollable fury he clutches it in his fingers and flings it on the floor.

'Base cowards!' are his words. 'You think to intimidate me with your threats! You dare to ask me to abdicate! Since when have my subjects ceased to obey me?'

'Since you have forfeited any right to their obedience,' answers Redif, the hate and contempt he felt ringing out in his voice; 'since the Sheikh-ul-Islam has removed you; since Europe has ceased to be your ally; since the army no longer obeys you; since Turkey has acknowledged Murad as its Sultan. If you doubt me, cast your eye without. Your palace is surrounded by my troops. Those who still are faithful to you are in my power. The ironclads are commanded by our captains. Submit yourself to the nation's will. The time is come and the hour.'

During this speech the Sultan, at first silent, endeavoured vainly to interrupt the torrent of Redif's words. Still he continues: 'Sire, I conjure you, for your own sake, to offer no opposition. The smallest resistance is useless.' And he points to the officers who guard the door, each armed with a revolver.

'And you dare to propose that I should yield passively to the orders of my nephew?' Yet, although his words are bold, already the grey shadows of terror were gathering over the Sultan's face.

'Sire, you must.'

'But I will call for help. Some faithful servants are still left. The Commander of the Faithful cannot yield to the menaces of a vile plotter like you.'

'I warn your Majesty, if you raise your voice, you are a dead man.'

'Would you assassinate me, slave?' demands Abdul Aziz in a horrified whisper.

'If it is necessary, certainly.'

'Then I have not a single friend?' asks the Sultan, a tremor passing over him, not of fear but of horror at his abandonment.

Redif was silent.

'My followers, my faithful soldiers, where are they?'

'Embarked this night for the Sea of Marmora.'

'Ah, I heard the steamers pass. I could not understand it.'

'Sire, time presses,' urges Redif, approaching the Sultan nearer than he had yet done. 'A caïque awaits your Majesty's orders on the landing. The Sultan Murad, now at the Seraskierate, takes immediate possession here. Follow me, I implore you, lest worse happen.'

'I follow you,' is the reply, spoken with the phlegmatic dignity of a Turk, who *au fond* holds his own life cheap, as being altogether in the hands of fate or *kismet*.

Leaning on the shoulder of the chief eunuch, the Sultan, covered with a thick mantle, advanced a few steps, then drew back. 'You answer for the safety of the harem, specially of Mihri Sultana,' adds he in a low whisper. Even at that crisis the laws of etiquette forbade him to mention her name aloud.

'I answer for them,' is the answer.

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The bow of the caïque containing the Sultan and Redif was directed to the landing-place of the Old Seraglio. The Sultana Mihri and his mother followed with a suite of slaves, children, nurses and attendants. It is said that sixty large caïques were needed for the passage of the harem. The royal apartments in the Old Seraglio, as I have said, were in great part burnt and ruinous, but a temporary residence was prepared in the

still remaining kiosks, which I have endeavoured to describe.

Nothing could be more unfitted for a luxurious sovereign and his pampered harem.

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May 30, 1876, is still fresh in the memory of thousands.

No sooner had the summer sun tinged the summit of the Asiatic hills, and touched with gold the cupola of St. Sophia, than the discharge of a hundred cannon announced to the world that a new Sultan reigned.

It was a bloodless victory. The white façade of the Seraskierate, the official residences at 'the Porte,' and flags waved over the tower of Galata. The fleet was dressed with all the bunting it was possible to obtain.

Carriages with ambassadors, their ladies, and pashas' wives; Arab riders, and the rabble of Greek, Jew, and Moslem, forming that nameless crowd proper to Constantinople, impeded the narrow streets, and pressed over the drawbridge of Galata in a solid mass of humanity almost impossible to pass.

Anon the firing of cannon announced that the new Sultan was leaving the Seraskierate for Dolmabatchke. The streets through which he passed were lined with troops. At three o'clock the state carriage appeared, drawn by four English horses. In it sat Murad alone, dressed in a

blue uniform, the brilliant star of the Medjidié on his breast, bowing graciously to his new subjects.

How different Murad looked now! In this Sultan of thirty-six, with his pale, handsome face, and large, intelligent eyes shining with animation and triumph, it was difficult to recognise the banished prince, surrounded by spies, and living in terror of his life. His face, with the exception of a small moustache, was shaven. He looked younger than he really was, as he bowed from side to side, with no intervention of turbans mechanically bowed by the hand of pages.

Officers of state and aides-de-camp followed his carriage on horseback, amid the cries of 'Padishah him chock yasha,' and the shrill clash of military bands—all who have been in Turkey know how discordant and loud these are—on through the populous quarters of Pera and Galata to the broad marble platform on which stands the elongated marble front of Dolma-batchke, with its great central portal flung open to receive him.

At the moment when his carriage passed the sculptured arcade, on a line with the great gilded gates, a young officer in the suite of the late Sultan, no other than Hassan the Circassian, of whom I shall have to speak further on, advanced with every mark of respect and handed a letter to Murad, who, in receiving it, could scarcely

master his emotion. As the letter was reproduced in the newspapers, I quote it here :—

'Majesty,—Permit the last of your subjects to be the first to congratulate you on the commencement of your auspicious reign. I have but one favour to implore of Your Majesty, that of my life, and that I may spend it in that same pavilion of the Palace of Cheragan you yourself constructed. I pray Allah in his wisdom to direct the counsels of Your Majesty, and if I may presume to advise you, I would beg you never to depend on your army. I sacrificed all to my soldiers, and they betrayed me. That you may live long and live happily, Sire, is the earnest prayer of

'Your devoted subject,

'ABDUL AZIZ.'

After the receipt of this letter, Abdul and his harem were immediately transferred to the Kiosk of Cheragan. Again Abdul Aziz demanded a change to the Palace of Beylerbey, on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, where, as I have said, he received the Empress Eugénie, and this request also was at once complied with.

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Five days passed. On the first Sunday in June, Abdul Aziz, who, it was rumoured, suffered much from sleeplessness, was seen from the win-

dows outside, walking restlessly up and down the *salon* he occupied, his hands clasped behind his back. He had taken little or no food for two days, and appeared to be plunged in the blackest despair. His face was sunk and haggard, his eyes dull. The Sultana Valideh was seated near him on a divan, and Mihri, who never left him for a moment, was also in the room.

After some trivial conversation the ex-Sultan begged to be left alone. He was tired, he said, from want of sleep. On the ladies objecting, he became more earnest in his request.

'I will lie down,' were his words, 'on a divan, and try to rest. Stay,' said he, as they were leaving the room, addressing Mihri, 'send me a hand-glass and a pair of Persian scissors; I want to trim my beard.'

These were his last words. He then locked and bolted the door which separated the selamlik from the harem.

What afterwards took place will never be known. Ismail Bey, who was on guard either in a corner of the room, or outside the door—this important detail has never been explained—first gave the alarm. When the Valideh and Sultana rushed in, Abdul Aziz lay stretched on the divan speechless, bathed in his blood, flowing from the arteries of his arms, wrists, and feet, which Ismail vainly endeavoured to stop with his handkerchief. He was already dead. His face, pale and flaccid,

was turned towards his shoulder, the scissors, stained with blood, beside him, and his beard cut to the very skin.

The screams of the two sultanas brought in the attendants. Nothing could be done. Ismail Bey declared that the Sultan was turned from him, and that before he could wrench the scissors from his hand he had cut open his veins. He had struggled a moment, then he sank never to rise again.

Such is the accredited story. It is not probable that, even had his death been decided on, it would have taken place in a manner at once so clumsy and so cruel, nor that after three years a *wrestler* and a *gardener* should have come forward and accused themselves of his assassination with any semblance of truth, in order to implicate others who were desired to be removed. The Turks are masters in the methods of quietly and silently ending life.

That Abdul Aziz died by his own hand may reasonably be inferred, especially after the evidence of two English doctors—Dickson, physician to the British Embassy, and Millingen—who examined him where he lay. The proud son of the great Mahmoud could not brook the outrages his subjects had inflicted on him. Educated in the traditions of oriental pride, he could neither acknowledge himself wrong nor bend to the just demands of his people. In the endeavour

to imitate his father, without his genius and judgment, Abdul Aziz became a foolish tyrant. What had been heroism in the father became obstinacy in the son. The destroyer of the janissaries seemed to hold a charmed life. His son was as other mortals, and, strange to say, reforms, usually so unpalatable to the Moslem, ensured to Mahmoud the respect of his people, while his inveterate attachment to the old *régime* caused Abdul Aziz's fall. The difference lay in the characters of the two sultans.

Spite of what I have written, it is positively asserted in high Turkish quarters that Aziz was murdered, and suspicion pointed to Midhat and his party, to whom his life and possible restoration would have been fatal.

It is true that the report of Dr. Dickson, physician to the British Embassy, who examined the body along with other native and foreign surgeons, declared that Aziz had died by his own hand; but by many of the Turks this is not accepted as conclusive.

Ten days afterwards the death of the Sultana Mihri was announced—'in giving birth to a second prince—the terrible emotions she had suffered from the death of the Sultan having prematurely carried off this young and beautiful princess,' as the newspapers described it.

Her funeral took place at Veni Djami. The bier, of polished wood, encrusted with mother-of-

pearl, covered by a rich Cashmere shawl, on which lay garlands of fresh roses, was preceded by the mollahs reciting verses of the Koran, and followed by a long train of pashas, beys, officers, eunuchs, and aghas, who turn by turn carried the coffin. It was noted that one of these bearers, a young officer of artillery, persistently held his place along the whole of the long road from Cheragan, where Mihri died, to Veni Djami. This was her brother Tcherkess Hassan, known as 'the Circassian,' and by the favour of his sister aide-de-camp to the late Sultan. Now Hassan, in the prime of strength and manhood, was renowned for his proficiency in the use of all weapons, a dead shot, a master of fence, and so sure a horseman he could hit eggs as he rode at full speed. Of a slender, wiry make, with reddish beard and the handsome features of his sister, his passionate grief at her funeral attracted general attention.

When the coffin was placed on the ground at the cemetery over Eyoub, among the grassy undulations of the hills, broken by the Valley of the Sweet Waters of Europe, and fresh chants and recitations rose from the mollahs and the crowd, it was Hassan's hand which last rested tenderly on the coffin before it was lowered into the earth.

As the imaum sprinkled the first handful of earth upon the lid, repeated by all the train of mourners, Hassan, overcome by emotion, leaned

half-fainting against a tree. Those among the crowd who observed him remembered these details, to which subsequent events lent a sinister significance.

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With the fall of Abdul Aziz and the death of the Sultana Mihri the career of Hassan had come to an abrupt end. So marked was he in his devotion to the cause of Abdul Aziz, that the Minister of War noted him as a possible conspirator, and, under the pretext of a command at Bagdad, a promotion which Hassan positively refused to accept, he was arrested. Liberated on parole, he was now on the eve of departure.

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The effect of this tragedy on Murad was disastrous. He passed sleepless and troubled nights, and suffered from maladies, variously described, which rendered him unable to perform the prescribed ceremony of girding on the sword of Othman at the Mosque of Eyoub, which had been put off from time to time under different excuses.

It was said that the real disease was mental, showing itself in gloomy fits of terror and profoundest melancholy, the hereditary malady of his race.

The heart and soul had been crushed out of him by the cruel treatment of his uncle; a prisoner, and living under constant fears of his life,

to make way for the son of Abdul Aziz, his gentle and somewhat feeble nature had received a shock from which he could not recover. In peaceful times he might have acquitted himself creditably of the task of reigning, but the catastrophe which brought about his accession to the throne was removed from even the ordinary course of imperial experience.

His uncle's violent death filled him with horror and remorse, and but two weeks after the terrible tragedy enacted by Hassan the Circassian, his mind, already tottering in its intelligence, was wholly upset.

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I have said that Hassan the Circassian, brother of Mihri, had been set at liberty after arrest on account of insubordination. His first act was to row across the Bosphorus to Scutari, where the Minister of War had his country house. There he learnt that he was gone to Stamboul in order to be present at a council held at the house of Midhat Pasha, who all the world expected would be very soon made Grand Vizier. Upon receiving this information, Hassan at once returned to the city.

Meanwhile night had come on, and, heavily armed under his military cloak, he mounted the dark streets of Stamboul—dark indeed, for at that time there was no gas—and arrived in due course at the brilliantly lighted konak of Midhat Pasha.

The Council was then sitting. Present—the Grand Vizier, the War Minister, the Minister of Marine, Midhat Pasha, President of the Council, Reschid Pasha, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Halet Pasha. They were all assembled in a large room on the first floor. Below gathered their aghas, officers and servants, sipping coffee and smoking cigarettes—a numerous company, as Turks of high rank never move without many attendants.

Hassan, well known as the brother of the Sultana Mihri and a favourite at Court, passed in without remark, and, like another Judas, sat down with the rest. His business, he said, was to see Hussein Avni Pasha. About midnight he stole upstairs, passing through the suite of empty rooms to the door of the council chamber, where Selim Agha, the *homme de confiance* of Midhat, was on duty. As soon as his head appeared coming up the stairs he was heartily greeted by Selim, who asked, 'What good chance has brought you here?'

'I am leaving for Bagdad to-morrow,' was his reply, 'and I have something to say to the Minister of War.'

'But his Excellency is engaged in the Council there,' and the agha pointed to the door. 'Who can say when they will have finished?'

'But I must see him,' insisted the Circassian; 'it is quite imperative, if I wait here for hours.

Upon which Selim Agha volunteered to go downstairs and to consult his aide-de-camp, Teofik Bey, how it could be managed.

No sooner was the agha gone than Hassan cautiously approached the door, and, raising the curtain, looked in.

The ministers were seated round a long table: Hussein Avni, the type of an elderly official Turk, of ample proportions, with a white beard and small piercing black eyes; in front, exactly opposite to him, the Grand Vizier, Midhat, and the others, with their backs turned.

In an instant Hassan was upon them. 'Do not stir, Hussein Avni!' he cried, and he discharged his revolver full upon him. Hussein fell badly wounded with a ball in his chest, and while he feebly endeavoured to defend himself a shout of terror rose from all the other ministers.

But, paying no heed to them, Hassan closed upon Hussein Bey, and attacked him with his yatagan as he lay on the floor.

By this time Midhat had rushed to the door at the end of the room leading to the inner apartments of the harem, the others following him, all but Reschid Pasha, who sat as if nailed to his seat, and Ahmed Pasha, who, turning on the assassin, seized him round the waist; but Hassan, extricating his right hand, managed to inflict on him several wounds, when Ahmed, too, in the struggle, gained the door and escaped. A horrible

imprecation passed the lips of Hassan as he saw his victims vanish, and, maddened with the thirst for bloodshed, he again fell on the unfortunate Minister of War, not yet quite dead, and hacking at him with his knife, finally cut his throat. Then, perceiving Reschid Pasha, who, stupefied with terror, had never stirred from the divan, he pointed his revolver at him and shot him through the head.

With the bound of a bloodhound Hassan then sprang to the door at the end of the room, trying to tear it open with his hands, shouting: 'I will have the life of the Minister of Marine! Open the door. Give him up to me, Grand Vizier; I will do you no harm.'

The Grand Vizier from within crying out: 'Not now, my son, not now. You are too excited to hear reason,' Hassan, with baffled rage, sending two shots through the door. Then he fell upon the furniture, which he tore like a wild beast, set fire to the curtains and broke the chandeliers, leaving not a single candle alight.

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In the midst of this scene of carnage and destruction, Midhat Pasha, armed with a revolver, having escaped downstairs by another way, prevailed upon his two aides-de-camp to proceed upstairs and endeavour to overcome the murderer. No sooner had they entered than both fell, struck by the unerring aim of Hassan.

But by this time the noise and the horror of the whole affair brought the police and soldiery from the nearest post, and Hassan, after killing a police officer and wounding several zaptiehs, was at last overpowered and secured. The soldiers would have killed him on the spot had not Midhat insisted that he should live and stand his trial.

On the following morning he was sentenced to death, and next day hung on a tree in the open space before the Seraskierate, a spectacle which several Turkish ladies of rank considered worth their attention and honoured with their presence.

There can be no doubt that the vengeance of Hassan was in the first place specially directed against Hussein Avni, the Minister of War, as the chief actor in the palace revolution which had dethroned his protector and master Abdul Aziz, and indirectly caused the death of his sister Mihri, to whom he was deeply attached, and on whose interest he counted for ensuring a rapid and brilliant career.

The other ministers were wounded or killed in self-defence, or in that wild madness of the blood which comes over the assassin and blinds him to all but the lust of slaughter and destruction.

But the effect of all this on the already weakened intellect of the Sultan Murad was fatal, and before long it became known that he was hopelessly insane.

The ministers would gladly have proposed his abdication, had they not been prevented by the most unusual reluctance of his next brother, Abdul Hamid, the present Sultan, to accept the throne—a *rara avis* among the royal Turks who cannot be sufficiently extolled.

At length even his objections gave way, in the face of the decided insanity of Murad, and on August 31 the thunder of the cannon at break of day announced to the world that the Sultan Murad had ceased to reign, and on the next day, Friday, Abdul Hamid coming from Dolma-batchke rode in state to the Mosque of St. Sophia, landing at the shore of the Old Seraglio. He then proceeded to the sanctuary in the old palace, where the holy shireff or mantle of the Prophet is deposited, to be recognised as the new Padishah by the Sheikh-ul-Islam and the ministers. While seated under the deep shadows of the Golden Throne before the Ortu Kapu, or middle gate (of the Seraglio), surrounded by ulemas and imaums and troops, the chant of proclamation was intoned, and on the same day the deposed Murad (now Murad Effendi) was removed to the Palace of Cheragan, where it is said he still remains.

No one knows if this unhappy young man is alive or dead. The kiosk of the palace, where he is said to reside, is just under the height of Yildiz, in the same park—so near are the two palaces—one on the hill, the other bathed by the

Bosphorus—where Abdul Hamid lives a life of concealment and fear. In passing on the steamer, I have often speculated on what those walls conceal —an imbecile prince; or only a memory? Who can tell?

Alone Hamid rode to the ceremony of the 'sabre' at Eyoub, about fifteen years before I saw him at the Selamlik in 1890, with a stern and set composure in his pale face of the true Eastern type. The look of terror which is now the dominant expression was not then so developed, but, young as he was, the gloom and melancholy were unrelieved by the semblance of a smile. An Indian idol could not have been more stolid as he advanced, seated upon a milk-white Arab charger, exquisite in form and perfect in paces, raising his hand to his beardless chin, with no acknowledgment of the ringing cheers from soldiers and multitude.

Of Abdul Hamid it is said that he never has signed a death-warrant; nevertheless he is of the true Turkish fibre, hates reforms, and lives concealed from his people.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BOSPHORUS

A distinction without a difference—Exquisitely beautiful—Anatoli and Roumeli Hissar—A panorama of unique scenes—Steamboat companions—A suggestive picture—A village of ambassadors—A classic view—The Symplegades—The forest of Belgrade—A wood rather than forest—The quay of Therapia—The Persian Embassy—Very little originality—Kindly Turkish drivers—Sir Alfred Sandison—A key to the Turkish conscience—Bulgarian refugees—The Sweet Waters of Asia—A kaleidoscope of colour—Adieu to Constantinople.

IT is the middle of June, and I find the temperature at the Royal Hotel decidedly oppressive. Sight-seeing involves rising at six, and remaining breathless in the house from twelve to five—a decidedly dull manner of passing the day. So I announce to my dragoman, Spiro, that I intend to go to Therapia and secure lodgings at Petali's Hotel.

Arrived at the bridge of Galata, where the sun is streaming down mercilessly, creating a blinding glare on the whiteness of the city, I discover there is a certain difficulty in reaching the right steamer. Such dozens are anchored alongside, all getting up their steam for every part of the world, that a practised eye is needed,

or one might find oneself wafted off across the Sea of Marmora, and down the Dardanelles to Salonica or Athens, or, in the opposite direction, steaming full tilt into the dark gates of the Black Sea, to Odessa or Batoum.

Arrived on the deck of one of the fine English-built boats which ply all day on the Bosphorus, much after the fashion of those on the Thames from Westminster to Southend, I take refuge under a friendly awning and look round.

The fore part of the boat on the lower deck, shrouded by a curtain, is appropriated to women of all classes, huddled together like a flock of sheep. Although eschewing the company of men, they make no objection to the entrance of vendors of drinks and sweets with trays upon their heads, or the official who takes the tickets. Now, if *one* man, why not *many?* In so modern an invention as a steamer this separation of the sexes appears doubly ridiculous. The appearance of these females is as a shapeless bundle of clothes covered with a cloak (*ferejeh*), without *form* as one may say, though anything but *void!* As the space is very closely packed and not especially fragrant, I did not linger long to make observations.

It is a lovely day: all Constantinople is astir; the hills and valleys of white-walled Stamboul, from the Point of the Seven Towers and the dark cypresses of the Seraglio to the Mosque of Eyoub, high on the crested range; Pera, and

Galata with its ancient tower, the black woods of the Petit Champ des Morts, and outlines of embassies terracing the slope up to the English embassy; the delicate trellis-work of masts and sails of ships anchored off Tophane are sharply defined in the clear summer air. The entrance of the Golden Horn (Chrysokéras of the Greeks) is blocked with innumerable caïques and small craft, and the Arsenal bristles with vessels.

On the opposite shore of Asia, Scutari stands out boldly, with its gaily-domed mosques and blanched walls gleaming in the sun; numerous villages, kiosks, woods, and gardens beyond stretch along the Asiatic coast of Marmora, so calm and still and blue, towards Chalcedon (Ismid) and Prinkipo, the largest of the seven Prince's Islands, soft dots on the broad main. Both shores, European and Asiatic, are sprinkled with innumerable flat roofs and white walls stretching on towards the desolate plains of Thrace, Adrianople and Philippopolis; Mount Olympus of Bithynia soaring overhead; the narrow passage of the Dardanelles lying beneath; and, beyond, the Grecian seas and the coast of the Troad—a misty world of history and song!

As the prow of our steamer turns northwards, the green banks of the Bosphorus gleam out on the ever-changing shore, with a succession of bays, land-locked by narrowing hills in snake-like windings. Low—indeed, too low—but glowing and

graceful in pastoral delights of groves, gardens, wooded capes; open valleys and cypress-darkened clefts, rounded downs, palaces, and mosques.

And now the procession of great palaces opens out on the left shore. Dolmabatchke linked with a mosque, its wide portal big enough for an army to march through, its white marble steps bathed in the flood; Cheragan, built by Mohammed II. and altered by Aziz—a wonderful enchantment, according to Turkish ideas, but to mine a huge, ugly, tasteless mass under which earth groans; Yildiz Kiosk, where the Sultan lives; and Beylerbey, on the opposite bank, backed by a green wood. Each of these lordly palaces, if examined closely, presents much matter to criticise; but, in their green setting of forest trees, they charm you absolutely against your better judgment, as you oscillate from Europe to Asia across the rapid current.

Taken as a whole, the Bosphorus, though the slopes never rise to a commanding height, is exquisitely picturesque, but in detail I cannot but criticise, notwithstanding picturesque villas here and there, brilliant with flowers, statues, and greenery; the palaces if placed elsewhere would be but shapeless quarries of marble without the sleeping beauties of those hills and broken cypress-planted glens down which the sun slants so lovingly.

The Asiatic shore is more striking and picturesque than the European, with a more

finished air of cultivation and wealth in its chain of villages and houses, their walls literally bathed in the waves. But on each hand, in Europe and in Asia, the summits of the hills are flat and bare. Even the so-called Giant Mountain lower down is a mere sandhill. It is the beautiful face of the unruffled waters of the Bosphorus—the Ox-ford of Io, who was changed into a cow by Jupiter and swam across from the jealousy of Juno—which arrests the gaze.

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We touch at the pier of Kandili, midway between the Upper and Lower Bosphorus, where a particoloured crowd presses in and out. Indeed one comes to be astonished at the incessant movement on every pier, of which there are so many.

I look up at a low dark wooden house, all windows to the front, as is the Turkish fashion, where I am destined to spend many a pleasant hour; but of this hereafter.

At Kandili the Bosphorus is at its narrowest, and the magnificent ruined pile of Mohammed II.'s castle of Roumeli Hissar on the European shore bursts into view, scaling the steep ascent with eccentric windings of machicolated ramparts, connecting three massive round towers of tremendous thickness. A most impressive ruin frowning midway in air, and a ruin the solidity of which would defy anything but dynamite.

From here started that fleet which Mohammed caused to be carried across the hills down the slope of Pera into the basin of the Golden Horn in order to close the harbour to the hard-pressed Greeks.

From every point of the Bosphorus the Castle of Roumeli Hissar rises supreme. The only striking object on the Asiatic shore is its *pendant* of Anatoli Hissar, in a village of that name, built by Bajazet I., but at this point the land dips low and the castle is unimpressive and in ruins.

It was between the sites of these two fortresses —a mile would span the distance—that Xerxes placed his bridge of boats, and, seated on the Asiatic side on a throne hewn out of the rock (the very spot under the walls of Anatoli Hissar is pointed out), surveyed the passage of his countless hosts, horses and elephants, into Europe, and —incredible folly—wroth with the action of the stream which runs here and with such violence as to be named the 'Devil's current'—caused the waters to be scourged! It was here, too, that the Latin Crusaders subsequently passed.

The building of the castle of Roumeli Hissar was the first step to the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks. Mohammed had already, in the reign of Manuel Palæologus, taken the castle of Anatoli on the Asiatic side. Two years before his march on Constantinople Mohammed II. commenced the walls of Roumeli Hissar, as a refuge in case of

defeat, which should secure him a quick passage into Asia. In vain did that last heroic Greek, Constantine Dragases, expostulate against the injustice of building a formidable fortress on Grecian territory in time of peace. The brutal Mohammed replied, 'That what his ancestors had failed in, he meant to do rapidly and well; and that if another envoy were sent to expostulate, he should be flayed alive.'

Nothing in history, except the building of the long walls of Syracuse by Dionysius the Elder, compares with the rapidity with which he put his design into execution. In three months the enormous fortress was completed. Supplies of timber had been already brought from Nicomedia and Heraklea, before the Sultan arrived to fix on the site—the curve of the bay of Stenia. The circuit of the walls was to take the form of the Arabic letter 'M,' producing, as we see it, the most intricate and extraordinarily shaped castle ever beheld.

The building of the three great towers (which remain in excellent preservation) was given to three generals. These three towers, rising at different elevations, which give the notion of a triangle, are most picturesque when seen from afar, and mark the ideal division of the Upper and Lower Bosphorus.

Above the castle, at the summit of the hill, is the square uncompromising front of the American

College! Barbarism and civilisation! The Crescent and the Cross! The peaceful walls built to teach science and languages, and the shattered remains of the blood-stained fortress of that butcher Mohammed II.!

Such signs mark the course of ages. At least we are better now: Owens College and Mohammed's Castle!

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The smiling little town of Kandili, backed with deep-tinted rows of wooden houses; the bustling pier where steamers puff and smoke all day, the double line of Asiatic hills in the background, the palace of the Valideh Sultana in a wood aloft; an immense cemetery darkly shaded by cypresses, the blue Bosphorus running between, thick with steamers, form the principal features of a unique scene!

Spiro, who had spent the hours in sleep, points out to me near by a vast white palace on the European shore as the home of the ex-Khedive Ismail Pasha, not altogether a *willing* guest of the Sultan or able to absent himself at pleasure; also the broad façade of the Persian Embassy, both buildings in the European style, with a terraced hill of gardens behind, to which I am destined by-and-by to pay another visit.

Thus we proceed, perpetually crossing and recrossing the Bosphorus (much broader here), now in Asia, now in Europe, and touching at

endless little quays, with a certain pleasing monotony. The painted wooden villas or kiosks, one half with perforated outer shutters for the harem, follow us on the Asiatic side. It is easy to see that here are the riches of the land, for here beys and pashas have their harem, always a sign of wealth. Yet I am told that polygamy, from the inability of the modern Turk to afford more than one wife, is more and more falling into disuse. Slaves and kadines do not count, but a *wife* is by law allowed many privileges and a certain stated establishment: hence the *appearance*, but not the reality, of increased morality.

I do not attempt to remember the names of all those little towns of wooden houses at which we stop. As I could never master them I leave them alone, with their piers always black with passengers, country carts, scarlet-tented arabas, and saddle-horses in the background.

But as I pass I look on a succession of pictures of a new, or rather of an old world; a constant going and coming of veiled women, each a bag of clothes, in red, blue, purple, yellow, and all the colours of the rainbow. I see one in white satin who comes on board with her black slave, a submissive-looking creature who sits with folded arms. Many linger on the little quays, passing quite freely among the men, and look round at the pretty villages and deep valleys clothed with pine and cypress which open up behind.

Beside me on the steamer is seated an imaum, or priest, in spectacles, a quiet, modern-looking man wearing a long cloth coat, exactly like a high church parson; a green turban being the only part of his dress which makes him look like a Moslem.

Two fat old fellows with dull bold faces under their ample turbans also come aboard with a great deal of swagger, and a masterful air as they seat themselves, immovable as statues, on the upper deck. You might have a fit, or be stabbed, or jump into the water, and these Turks of the old school would not betray the least emotion. Now emotion and the play of feelings are the result of civilisation, therefore they are savages. Like the sensibility of a delicate ear to the harmonies of music, the play of emotion in the human frame is an indication of mental culture and refinement. Turks are without it. It is we who have gone forward, and they who have stood still. Their fierce expressionless eyes, prominent noses, and hard features are those of an early nomadic race softened down somewhat by the white blood which runs through the veins of their Circassian or Georgian mothers. A full-blooded Turk is rare to find.

But I am wandering. At one village there is a negro, as black as ebony, short, stout, and half naked, who, with his turban on his nose, coils and makes fast the heavy hawser of the steamer.

How often that excellent fellow must put out all his strength for the many steamers which touch there, his black nose in the air, his black hand struggling desperately with the thick rope! Such work could never be compassed by a Turk—that fat one, for instance, in a full turban and ample drawers, who takes the tickets at the little wooden wicket: he is a lazy fellow.

The crowd of common Turkish women everywhere ceases at length to interest. They are such frights, with such full, ugly, painted faces. Ladies rarely travel in this way, tumbling about in steamers, but in a caïque or attended by their slaves; for a Turkish lady is a very dignified person. Some of them, very handsome, with splendid eyes and clear complexions, much assisted by cosmetics, shaded by parasols, float by in their caïques.

Through the open doors of the picturesque wooden houses on the Asiatic shore the selamlik looks quite unfurnished. Now and then a solitary Turk is to be seen reposing on a divan; apparently there is little else in any of the rooms. Some may be less bare, but the generality look like barns.

The gardens outside are given up to the women. As we glide by I see them seated in groups on a carpet, quite still, as though playing at being good children.

This habit of squatting about on every bit of shade is universal. A Turk will never cut down

a tree, because he loves it ; and the deeply-wooded glens behind the villas are filled with ornamental kiosks in which to enjoy the shade. A charming life in summer ; but woe betide those who inhabit them in winter when the frozen winds blow from the Black Sea!

Now we are passing a lovely villa, white as snow —all windows, as is the mode ; on a broad parterre of verdant banks of grass a sculptured fountain plays. The iron gates are open, and fine trees wave cool and delicious: a real garden of delight. There is not a soul about. The entrance is turned towards the Bosphorus, and in the open space is the figure of a slight African girl in white watching the passing world. Many an uneasy glance she casts with her big eyes under her white veil towards the house, which makes it evident to me that she has slipped out unbidden and may be whipped for her pains. As the steamer passes she turns again, hanging on to the gate enchanted. I see in every line the delight of the brief dream of momentary freedom. The terror and the downcast submissive movements of a slave are upon her, as her thin petticoat catches the wind. How nervously she clings to the gate ! I can read it all ! How sweet is the temptation ! A look back—no one there. Oh, freedom—how sweet it is ! Again she turns to the gaudy show on the water and the boats. She knows she is doing wrong, but how can she resist it ? The living picture of a weak

woman, dreading the punishment while she loves the sin!

Now a party of Turkish men come noisily along the towing-path of the shore past the gates. In a moment they are closed and she hides behind. Then, as their footsteps die away, she is there again. Poor little frail slave!

I wonder if the ladies are kind to you? If they slap you with their hands? Or make the eunuch do it? One thing I can testify. You have had half an hour of perfect happiness in your life—I saw it!

There she was still, her white fluttering figure growing less and less in the distance as we steam away, until she and the white palace and the green garden and the high gates became a point in the horizon.

Speaking of slaves, I have seen but one eunuch at the Selamlik with the Sultan's ladies. *He* was a fat giant, about six feet—a wretch!

We steam past the sweet banks of the bay of Stenia, full of creeks and clefts, which calls to mind the Argonauts, Jason and his fellows. The Giant Mountain, the highest point of the Bosphorus on the Asiatic shore, rises in front and impresses me as much as would a molehill on a prairie. The lines of Byron I will not quote. Like all else written on Constantinople and the Bosphorus, they depict an *ideal* world.

Beicos, where the English diplomatic colony

at Therapia have established their cricket-ground, is sweet. The white palace—the only royal abode I cared for on the Bosphorus—overtops lofty terraces of flowering trees, pile upon pile, with a delicate abundance of feathery boughs on emerald spaces, facing the opening of a wide avenue of ancient trees, leading straight up many miles to the summit of the mountain.

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Now the dancing shore of Buyukdere is in front, a line of ambassadorial palaces marking the curve of a richly-wooded bay, running back into the forest of Belgrade.

To the right of the sparkling waves is the narrow entrance to the Euxine Sea, bounded by arid hills; to the left is Therapia, its tiny pier trodden by the footsteps of the great, situated on a jutting cape which terminates a smiling bay, where ride the stately *stationnaires* of England, France, and Germany; behind, a village of ambassadors, who settle the politics of Europe in perfumed shade.

The last of the row of summer palaces fronting the shore is the huge, red-walled embassy of England, conceived in singularly bad taste, neither Turkish nor English, Oriental nor Northern, but with a heterogeneous touch of each: a blot in a charming position, a discord in an otherwise harmonious whole.

The last or first place which you reach at

Therapia, according as you arrive from north or south, is the comfortable establishment of Petali's hotel, with a charming view from every window, an honoured caravanserai well known to fame, its tiny esplanade dipping in the Bosphorus, surrounded by caïques, boats, and steam launches.

Here I leave the steamer and proceed to establish myself in a suite of airy rooms. And this charming passage (too short, indeed), which has introduced me to Asia, is comprised in the space of two hours.

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The beauty of the day is quite extraordinary. The blue waters ripple on the low wall of the hotel, tumbling up into tiny waves as each moment caïque after caïque, with white-clad Albanians in the bows, heaves in, seeking for custom; the huge *stationnaires* which ride at anchor dark against the hills, the deep sepia tints of the wooden houses scattered round the bay; great steamers, mostly Russian, steaming down towards the Black Sea, bound to Batoum or Odessa; the constant succession of river steamers, the crowds of people pressing on the quay, as of many nations in motion; the blare of the trumpets from the vessels, awaking echoes in the cool woods, as some ambassador shoots by in his launch, bound to Stamboul on affairs of state, flags flying from mast and pole—form a striking picture of exuberant activity and life.

In front, across the Straits, is the smiling shore of Beicos, shadowed by ancient trees; the Giant Mountain, at the top of which a little mosque is just visible beside the tomb of Juscha (vulgarised into Joshua), or, as some say, of Hercules, from whom the hill (Giant) takes its name; the charming wooded valley of Hunkiar; Selim III.'s paper mills; the bay of Betryas, where Amycus the king challenged all strangers to a tussle with the cestus, and got killed by Pollux on the return of the Argonauts; and Asiatic Bithynia nodding to our shore in Thrace (for Therapia is in Thrace, whence came the robust mercenaries of the later Empire). Each shore narrows into the gates of the Black Sea at Anadoli Kavak, the ancient Straits of Hieron, known in earliest history as the nearest point of approach—positively a stone's throw—between Europe and Asia; the presence of two continents giving dignity to the view, and a world of history, ancient and classic, which I study seated on the little pier of the hotel.

Past this spot Jason sailed to Colchis in the Euxine (Black Sea). The name of Beshiktash, the ancient Jasonion, close to where the Sultan has his summer palace of Cheragan, refers to the Petra Thermastis mentioned by Dionysius as a rock distinguished by its form, where ships now as then still lie at anchor.

At Koron Chesmesh, 'the dried-up fountain,' stood a laurel tree planted by the hands of

Medea when she landed with Jason; and here too, in my zeal to search all history, I found the column on which Simon Stylites stood for twenty-eight years.

In the pretty bay of Stenia, on the side where the Bosphorus opens out with much beauty into an uninterrupted view right down to Buyukdere, the Argonauts erected a temple, Sosthenia, to commemorate their gratitude for being saved from the tyrant Amycus, king of the Bebryces (Beicos), who ruled at the foot of the Giant's Mountain, on the opposite shore, and had refused them a passage.

Alarmed at so near and powerful an enemy, they ran their little fleet into the smiling bay, when a genius or divinity with eagle's wings appeared to them, an apparition so comforting to their feelings that they straightway recommenced fighting with Amycus, and dedicated their temple to a statue with a heavenly face. Constantine the Great is said to have found this temple—which fact I do not vouch for—and to have turned it into a convent; the winged statue being metamorphosed into St. Michael.

It was at Therapia, the ancient Pharmakia that Medea spread her poisons over Thrace and scented the air.

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The courage of the Argonauts is not to be despised, when we consider that at that time navi-

gation was extremely unsafe, even in the Grecian seas, for small craft, on account of hidden rocks, strong currents, and uncertain charts, and that to the men of Argos the dangerous passage of this estuary from the Propontis to the Black Sea was like sailing into Cimmerian darkness.

Faner Keui, or Fanaraki, so called from its lighthouse, is at the extreme point of the Bosphorus, on the European side, where the shore is bare and treeless; and opposite are the Symplegades rocks, through which Jason steered; they are said to rise and fall, an obvious effect of the stormy rush of the waves.

Jason, on his expedition for the Golden Fleece —meaning, in plain prose, to obtain the precious sheep's wool of Colchis—dared to perform the dangerous voyage in his trireme, according to the advice of King Phineas 'first to send out a dove.' This was not to follow the example of Noah after the deluge, who is said to have set free a veritable bird; but to examine the rocky coasts in a small craft of the same name, similar to those in constant use by the Turks at the present day under the name of 'swallow.'

When it is said poetically, 'The dove lost its tail,' it would signify the closing of the rocks of the Symplegades by the force of the wind acting on the strong current, so that the boat was caught and injured, losing perhaps her rudder.

The cape of Youm Bournou, forming the

extreme point on the Asiatic shore, which juts out into the narrow entrance of the sea, was anciently called 'the Anchor Cape,' from the stone anchor which Jason took from here. This anchor was subsequently sanctified, and the bay has been christened 'of the Holy Sideros,' or anchor.

In this neighbourhood was the temple of the twelve gods, to whom Jason, on his return from Colchis, offered sacrifice; besides, it is asserted, temples of Zeus Urios (sender of fair winds) and Poseidon on one side, and on the opposite shore one to Sérapis and Cybele—so that Jason could not be accused of ingratitude to the gods who defended him and his Greeks from the dangers of the deep, and from the monsters, called 'Harpies,' who fed on human flesh.

These so-called temples were probably nothing but shrines—wooden *cellæ*, perhaps; there is little space on this barren spot for such buildings as are usually called 'temples.' Jason too and his Argives were strangers in a perilous land, desiring to return at the earliest moment to Greece, and would never have tarried to erect veritable temples; but that the expedition is localised here by undeniable tradition is certain.

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There is little other classical tradition associated with the Asiatic side, except at Scutari, the ancient Chrysopolis, where Chryses,

the son of Chryseis and Agamemnon, fleeing from Ægistheus, the murderer of his father, is said to have died.

I know not if I should mention the ruin, called the Tower of Ovid, at the entrance of the Black Sea, which *may* mark the traditional spot of his banishment, on account of his bold passion for the imperial Julia—a parallel to that of Tasso for Leonora of Este, which sent him in after ages to the seclusion of St. Onofrio.

Such a site does exist, and it still bears Ovid's name.

BELGRADE

The 12th of June was a most lovely day for our expedition to the forest of Belgrade, on which, however, we did not start without some fear of brigands; and the worst of Turkish brigands is, they rob you and then cut your throat. But a reassuring note from the Embassy that 'it was quite safe as far as the bends or reservoirs,' set our minds at ease, and three carriages full of ladies, protected by a dragoman, seemed to offer at least a troublesome capture to any one.

From Therapia we took the steamer to Buyukdere. In about ten minutes we were on the landing stage and selecting carriages from a number on the pier.

Buyukdere is a little town not half so

unsophisticated as Therapia, where you might walk out in your slippers. There is an air as of a miniature metropolis about it, with its fine ladies and dandy men and crowds of beggars.

Here America, Austria, Russia, Spain, Belgium, and Roumania hang out their flags on the fronts of wooden palaces, all windows and deep projections.

On the edge of the shore we pass a group of seven wide-spreading ash trees, overshadowing a rough country restaurant. There is a tradition that the most ancient of these splendid trees sheltered the tent of Godfrey de Bouillon, encamped here in 1096, on his passage to the first crusade, and a track over the hills is still pointed out as that taken by the Crusaders.

One does see noble trees in Turkey, and of great age, ash mostly, a tree which lasts long. If at Birnam a tree is identified as being as old as Macbeth (if he ever existed), and at Fontainebleau an oak contemporary with Charlemagne, why should not this stately ash have spread its boughs over the future King of Jerusalem? At least it must point to some tradition of his presence here.

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The road runs along a pleasant avenue of planes, low wooded hills on either side. For a long time we traverse loose stones on the edge of sandy banks, which look as if they must give

way, the poor single horse behind us, in the heavy country cart with its load of three ladies, galloping painfully to keep pace with our spirited little pairs in two good victorias.

At last, when we reach a halting-place, where there is a shed or café full of rough Turks, and some fierce-looking gipsies seated on a mat playing a tam-tam, drum, and fife—most feeble and impotent music—I entreat the ladies to get out, so as to relieve the poor horse, which stands all bathed in foam, and dripping.

Other carriages are drawn up here, and parties are squatting about on the grass, in that aimless way Turks have of sitting under a tree all day, without moving except to boil a little coffee.

Now, as we reach a lofty aqueduct, spanning a wide wooded valley, our little horses address themselves to ascend a deeply-wooded gorge, which gathers us up into its folds. It is not a forest, but rather an English wood, with undergrowth of ferns, grass, and plants, the trees chestnut, plane, and ash, but no oaks. One place is so broken and precipitous, and the road so narrow, that we have to get out while the horses drag the carriages, quite out of their centre of gravity, over yawning chasms.

As the wood gathers thickly about us, I grow nervous. Great trees stand out like sentinels, spreading broad branches, and a deep descent with a vicious turn in the road, round which

our horses gallop quite recklessly, altogether upsets me.

It is mysterious and pretty, this scamper through the wood, but I am delighted to emerge into daylight and sunshine at the vast opening of the bends or reservoirs, with deep green banks under low hills, much like a succession of Scotch lochs, where the water is stored to supply Constantinople, and very dirty and muddy it looks under the shadow of the trees.

Now I must explain that we are in Thrace, and that after centuries of rapine and warfare these are the only forests left in that tree-planted land, and that the high bridge or aqueduct we have passed, with balustrades in marble, was a mighty work, done by the Emperor Andronicus Comnenus, to lead the water into the city, and that the bends or lakes have been perfected and added to by succeeding sultans up to the time of Mustafa III. in 1766.

At the bends the scene is quite reassuring, and I can enjoy its extreme beauty and the sweet scents and vivid colouring, bathed by a brilliant sun.

A number of carriages are in waiting, some actually broughams, drawn up under the walls which dam the water; and there are people sitting and walking about, and a little café under the solemn shadow of the trees, which stand out like leafy giants in their wooded homes.

Returning we took a shorter route by the black-walled village of Belgrade, built wholly of wood, where Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, as English ambassadress, had her summer residence. The diplomatic world is not so easily contented now, but lives in palaces at Therapia and Buyukdere.

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The village of Therapia is quite unique. Every house represents a nation with a nation dependent on it. At the door in front is a brilliant row of dependents in national uniforms, and behind a great cool hall.

On the quay in the sweet evening, when the air is still, is to be seen a glittering crowd consisting of ambassadresses in smart carriages or on foot, young ladies, secretaries, attachés, walking, or on donkey or horseback, or in boats; caïques floating by with their illustrious freights of diplomats and ministers; and a party of pashas gravely traversing a dusty road in no way adapted to such distinguished company. Launches full of gaily dressed people glide by on water calm as oil; passenger boats and big Russian steamers plough up banks of surf; solemn-faced beys amble along on sleek Arabs, both horse and master looking as proud as Lucifer; a party of veiled ladies, crammed into a small landau, pretending not to look, nevertheless scanning everything eagerly; and dainty Greek ladies, with large eyes, picking their way in the mud.

A Watteau scene in a Watteau life, like nothing but those landscapes of that painter with the columned temples and the garlands ; the false tone of an artificial life brought into tangible shape, with a fantastic background which lends itself to the illusion. The gay palaces illuminated in the summer night with torches and lanterns; the ladies in diamonds and feathers wandering among flowery woods; the cavaliers sword-begirt, in embroidered vests, their breasts a sheet of orders, bowing as they kiss a fair one's hand; the dark bosquets and blooming bowers under umbrageous woods; the ambassadors with jewelled crosses and collars of gems, their ladies trailing long gowns, many-coloured as Joseph's coat; the ball or the reception, half in and half out of the palace, with glancing groups gathered on marble steps under the moon, a naughty ray or two shining where it ought not, as is the wicked habit of that luminary; the dancing-room dazzling with lights—all forming a scene of splendid revelry, only to be found on these enchanting shores, where Medea cast her spells in time of yore.

Therapia will always linger in my memory as a poetic dream of some other planet akin to Venus and Mars.

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Of all the entertainments, that which I liked best was a reception at the Persian ambassador's.

We started from the English Embassy in the launch, accompanied by the entire 'divan' of secretaries, ladies, attachés—military and civil. The kind ambassadress sat on the deck in evening dress. Though the air was mild and warm, I declined to imitate this feat of daring, and with others as prudent as myself retired to a luxurious cabin lined with mirrors.

Arrived at the pier below the Embassy, announcing itself far off in the night by a blaze of illumination which spread over the entire range of heights, such as the hills of Stamboul display at the feast of Bairam, a gold-bedecked crowd of kavasses and lackeys, officers and attachés, assist us ladies along the plank on to the shore, one kavass never leaving the ambassadress for a moment, but devoting to her and her alone his stalwart arm, until she was safely housed and divested of such light wraps as she had condescended to wear.

I found the saloons painfully European. All nationality seems utterly to have died out in Turkey. Here are papered walls, heavy gilding, and cumbersome chairs. There was not an article, I am sure, that did not come from Vienna—which indeed, in one sense, is not saying much, for Turkish houses *au naturel* have, as I have said, little furniture to boast of.

The Persian Minister, a dark, sun-dried man, with most pleasant eyes—a great favourite

with the whole Diplomatic Corps—wearing the queer cap of his nation, received us with the utmost courtesy. In the saloon are assembled a number of Turkish ministers and diplomatic swells, come for the fête from Stamboul, Buyukdere, and Therapia; but before I have time to look at them, the ambassador at once carried us off to the harem, which to my great chagrin I find consisted of a couple of rooms off the reception rooms or selamlik.

It is most unusual for a Mussulman to enter his harem in company, but this good-tempered Persian did, and then withdrew. The Persians are looked upon as unorthodox by the Turks, and are much less strict in their religion.

Here we meet his only wife—another disappointment, a Circassian—ready to receive us, in ordinary evening dress, with a wreath of jewels twisted in her hair; a somewhat faded beauty of the soft and delicate type, with long languid eyes and sweeping eyelashes. Beside her was her little daughter, aged twelve, wearing many diamonds, in whose honour the fête was given, to celebrate her engagement with the son of the Persian minister at Paris. He, young as herself, was pursuing his studies there. An ordinary little person this girl-bride, with little of the refinement of the mother, and evidently very much frightened.

The ambassadresses of Austria, England,

Germany, and Russia seat themselves around the lady in a circle; a little conversation in French is attempted, but it fell very flat. The Circassian lady smiled sweetly, but said little. I am bound to say it became portentously dull, and it was a decided relief when the ambassador re-entered, and said with a pleasant smile: 'Mesdames, si vous ne revenez pas au salon, il n'y aura pas de réception du tout.'

At this we all rose. The various nations kissed Persia effusively in a pretty way, she curtseying and smiling with excellent grace, although nothing but a slave—all Circassians are bought and sold like horses—who had been educated by the minister himself.

The rest of the evening passed exactly like any other reception. Little *entrain* of conversation is possible where all are diplomatists and ministers. There was supper, and a band played execrable Turkish tunes in the hall below. We admire the illumination on the terraced hills, shrouded by enormous trees, and steam home into the night, with the consciousness of having peeped into a new world.

Again a most lovely day! The blue water, fanned by a fresh breeze, forming into little ridges like a background by Claude. The sails so white, the hills so green, the rocks so red, make a bright and brilliant world, gleaming with summer sun.

Now the bright lights fall on the walls of the

German Embassy opposite—too like a pert little villa in the Isle of Wight—the only unpicturesque house in Therapia, with its red-tiled roof and new walls, a dark hill of pines in deep shadow behind.

I turn to another side; one embassy after another catches my eye, bordering the rural shore. Italy lives in a rather shabby house. France in two, not much better, with sloping gardens and breezy woods mounting the steep hill. On a point round which runs a strong current, England is folded in bowery groves, impenetrable to the sun, with green winding walks mounting a steep hill bordered by great elms, an English wood, full of pink cistus, and daisies and buttercups, in which I often walk. Here successively Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, the Elliots, and Lord Dufferin have lived in state, a crowd of lackeys in rich liveries about the doors; stalwart Greek and Albanian boatmen in full costume, embroidered fez, and jackets shimmering with gold, and loose white drawers; Turkish grooms, hangers-on, and the great kavass, who always accompanies my lord or my lady, in a brilliant uniform, embroidered in gold. Diplomacy is never so picturesque as at Therapia, where it mixes with the common throng, with no jealous barriers.

A VISIT

I drive through the deep green valley at the back of Therapia—rich with vines, pomegranates,

figs, peaches, and strawberries, a real oasis of fertility—by an avenue of sycamores. The road is wonderfully good, considering it is in Turkey: and very pretty as it winds up the hill, only the indiscreet Turk had at this dry season turned it into a bed of stones, which causes our willing little horses to strain their muscles terribly.

The Turkish driver rarely uses the whip, but manages his team with hand and voice. The Greeks, like the Italians, are cruel to animals; but a Turk, who loves his horse, and to whom cats and dogs are sacred—never.

Well, up we go, in the nice open country car, until the valley and the sycamore avenue merge into an undulating open common at the top, lovely with heather, fern, and grass, a regular Berkshire common, breaking into deep, precipitous chasms and tracks towards the wooded masses of the Belgrade forest. But for the peeps of the blue Bosphorus and the low Asiatic hills, it is marvellously like English scenery.

If our road were followed on, it would lead us to Constantinople, but we turn off sharp to the right over soft sand which would have been considered a horse-track at home. Sometimes we shave the loose edges of deep banks; sometimes we rise up on the bare summit of the heath; up and down, in and out, the little horses quite unmoved by yawning chasms or jolting rocks. Any others would have shied and reared and plunged,

but all the evils of the land come well to a Turkish horse.

As the Black Sea spreads out before us, what an immensity unfolds to the mind's eye! Batoum, the Russian citadel, quietly aggrandising itself into dangerous strength; Trebizond in Armenia, that obscure and learned land, whence come the fat quiet people who are always complaining—so much more Asiatic than the Turks, who are but nomadic after all—and said to be so ill-governed by the Turks; Georgia beyond, and yet further Circassia, lands of beauteous slaves; to the other side of the Black Sea, the great mart of Odessa, the land of corn; the Sea of Azoff in the distance, and that strange inland ocean, the Caspian.

As the grand procession of great ships comes smoothly down, the white sails bellying to the breeze, I ask myself to what strange and distant lands is their merchandise destined? What unthought-of localities and bygone names surge up to my memory! Russia in its deepest recesses, the Caucasus and Tiflis, or towards the debated land near Afghanistan, the great Empire of Persia and the northern parts of India. It makes one's head turn to look at the dingy expanse of sea which opens out with such apparent innocence before me.

The shores look barren and cold, the water uneasy and stormy. No wonder all the winds and

storms come from beyond those frozen fields of everlasting ice, far up in the Russian steppes, along the broad course of the Volga!

On we went on the eccentric track over the common until we came in sight of what seemed a congeries of huge wooden boxes, at the bottom of a descent so absolutely straight that, with a scream, I jumped out and walked, staring fixedly at the Black Sea in front. Indeed for a time I could think of nothing else.

After our carriage had hung on the perpendicular for some time, we reached a slight level in a hollow, and found that the wooden boxes out on the waste formed a house, the actual residence of Sir Alfred Sandison, the chief dragoman of the British Embassy, and as important a man as the Turkish Empire contains.

Why he should camp out in this wild moor is more than I can say, but so he does. True, he has one of the finest views in the world, but one cannot pass one's life looking at a view; and in other respects it must be a most inconvenient spot. There is, indeed, a short cut down to Therapia, through deep, sandy gullies, ending in a series of stone-laid steps at the foot of a quite precipitous hill, and the coachman at starting had seriously intended to take me, carriage and all, up what might be vulgarly designated as the side of a house, an honour which I declined. But Sir Alfred Sandison, who is a strong and hale man and a sportsman to

boot, and loves these hills, daily rides up and down these break-neck steps towards the British Embassy on the shore.

On entering the gate, marked by a dwarf poplar or two and a big tent, which would be noble to sleep in if rooms were wanting, we found that one of the boxes is a small drawing-room, the windows of which look out upon the Black Sea, a high platform connecting it and another box, which, I suppose, contains the bedrooms. A funnier house I never had the luck to see!

Lady Sandison was most agreeable, and took us to sit in a sort of porch, much more pleasant than the drawing-room with both doors open and the wind pouring in at all the windows.

Sir Alfred is a tall, weather-beaten man, with a face full of character, and with a voice to which it is a pleasure to listen; I am sure it must charm the Sultan. Such a pleasant easy talker, too, and in so many languages—Arabic, Turkish, Greek, French, German, and Italian. A dragoman *indeed!* Without any pedantry or pretence, but a man aware that he holds in his brain all the secrets of Europe. For not one word can our ambassador say to the Sultan without his help.

'I know too much,' he said with a laugh; 'it makes me uneasy.' Just to think of all the complications of Eastern politics, the intricacies, the

subterfuges that man must know, and the delicate tact he must show!

Sir Alfred has a high opinion of the Turks but much dislikes the duplicity of the Greeks. He says half the crimes and cruelties fathered on the Turks are done by the Greeks, so cruel as brigands and robbers. The Turk, he says, if not provoked, is proud, kind and gentle, and does not condescend to petty crimes. And Sir Alfred knows well, seeing he has been in the conscience of the nation so long, and is acquainted with all the ins and outs of the palace, that hot-bed of intrigue!

We came home by the short cut, the horses walking and sliding, with the carriage perpetually out of the centre of gravity. I did *not* come down the stone steps (good Heavens! what an idea!), leaving the coachman to conduct his pair, and to *tie* the wheels together for want of a drag, but strolled down through the woods of the French Embassy, where the nightingales were singing out their little throats in the thick boughs.

. . . . . .

To-day I have seen what the Black Sea can do. Such crested waves rolling on; such a hubbub round the point of the English Embassy; all pouring in from the narrow opening to the sea! No boats and few ships are out, but the steamers are plying as usual. It must, indeed, be rough!

I can quite understand people saying the

Black Sea is never quiet. Surely it is the home of all the winds, where they circle and curdle, turn and twist, whistling, rushing, and roaring, to burst out over Europe.

In the afternoon all is still, and I am cutting through the blue water in a *mouche*, the green valleys opening out on either hand, as we steer in close upon the shore. We pass a small palace, deep in a wooded dell, called the Kiosk of the Conference, a lovely spot, but falling into ruin. Trees literally smother it. Many would gladly buy it, but the Sultan cannot sell. Opposite is the wooded coast of Beicos, on the Asiatic side, all joy and gladness to look at; but the truth is, the Turks abhor the Christians, and would cut all our throats if they could. These fair and jocund scenes of which I am writing are possessed by a race with whom you cannot trust yourself an hour. As we steamed by the shore, so gaily embroidered with the beauties of Nature, all looks peace and goodwill, yet a few days after, to that same Beicos, a little to the left behind the Sultan's villa, I went, and so sulky was the aspect of the peasants and soldiers, so rude their gestures, that I and my companions thought it prudent to retreat to our boat at once.

Horrid tales are told of Beicos. A diplomatic attaché and his wife were assaulted here, and the lady treated in an unspeakable manner; and two years ago, a French secretary of legation,

rowing over in the cool of the evening, was robbed, and would have been murdered but for the loud cries of his Greek boatmen, which roused the Turkish guard and saved him.

And so passes our pleasant trip in the Austrian *mouche*, concluding with tea at Kandili with charming Mrs. Hanson, who maintains five hundred Bulgarian refugees employed in embroidery, and has been decorated by the Sultan for her benevolence.

THE SWEET WATERS OF ASIA

The Sweet Waters of Asia are about an hour's row from Therapia with a good wind. A caïque carries no sail; but her build is so light the smallest puff of air makes itself felt. In bad weather it is an extremely unsafe boat.

I start with my favourite Greek sailor and a man to pull the bow oar, and glide across the Bay of Stenia, with its placid landscape, within hail of that mighty ruin which frowns upon the hill. Roumeli Hissar, a Turkish village, lies at its base, with many large country houses on the quay. Every moment we pass gardens, dark-walled villas, towers, and villages all of wood.

The water highway is quite alive to-day: caïque after caïque dashes by with its freight of Turkish ladies, with never a man, or even a eunuch, in their company, except the rowers—all looking extremely cheerful, and carrying the

gayest of parasols; to say nothing of other boats with men hovering about, but at a respectful distance, the paddles of the steamers ploughing up mimic storms and suspending the frail craft as if in air.

The division of the sexes in Turkey is complete. A mother cannot be accompanied by a son, a sister by a brother, a wife by a husband, or, in fact, any male except eunuch or servant.

But the ladies all laugh and talk, knowing nothing of the 'balance of society.' And indeed, what could a Turkish lady talk about to a strange man, or he to her, but love?

The intellectual gifts of the ladies are nil, except in the case of a sister, daughter, or niece of a vizier, or a relation of the Sultan. She is a mere nullity. Then, not from any merit of her own, but if of high rank for the sake of the interest she disposes of, she at once becomes a personage, and receives devoted attention from her husband.

Passing the Devil's current opposite Kandili, it was rough, and I was frightened. Then, leaving the little town of Anatoli Hissar to the left, we came upon a lovely palace, white as snow, backed by deep woods, in a delicious shade. Green lawns stretch in front, bound in by marble balustrades, and a waterfall rushes down, sounding a natural cadence in the green symphony which plays around.

What a lovely palace! Like a poet's dream!

A little too modern in style, and savouring too much of the Bois de Boulogne, but so framed in that green bank of Asia, and with that sheeny expanse of blue in front, that all criticism is impossible.

Caïques anchored in front at the low wall, and groups full of colour under the trees, announce the presence of the fair. For to-day is Friday, the Moslem Sunday, and all the world is out to enjoy itself.

Turning sharp round, our caïque passes into a narrow river, with reedy banks and flat green fields on either side—so like one of our sluggish Berkshire streams making its way through alder and nut-wood, that for a moment I forget where I am, until the sight of a tumbledown and very dirty village recalls me. A vile place of wooden houses this, of evil smells and poultry, veiled women sitting in rows, and turbaned males—all staring at the passers-by to the Sweet Waters. For I must not forget to say that this English-looking river is the sweet, or fresh water, as distinct from the Bosphorus, tainted with the brine from the seas at either end—Marmora at one, and the Euxine at the other—and that the houses of Galata and Tophane, and the many villages on the banks had emptied themselves for the fête.

We glide up the cool river, past a neglected cemetery under a hill. Here are stone turbans on the upright tombstones, and turbans on the

ground, with dark cypresses overhead, reminding one that all is not glitter and sunshine, colour and glee, dancing waves and painted kiosks in this land of sun.

Boats and caïques row past every moment; the water is so shallow that there is a certain difficulty about steering, and we are brought to close quarters with dark, sensual-looking men and piled-up masses of dolls with parasols. Under a rustic bridge beside a mill we almost come to grief and foul other caïques, but no one moves a muscle, as though it would be a matter of perfect indifference whether we were capsized into the mud or not!

Under a grassy and shaded bank, where the river recedes, I come on a company, squatting, sitting, or walking up and down, the gentlemen promenading and staring hard (at no great distance either) at the groups of ladies massed together. And it is thus, either here or at the Sweet Waters of Europe or at the Bazaar, that a Turk has the sole opportunity of surveying the lady of his love. The veil is very thin, and much drawn back, being indeed little more covering than the tulle we use.

If he is pleased by the face and accepts the lady's family, the matter is arranged by his mother or aunt, who visits the lady in her harem, makes minute examination, and reports. This is all a Turk knows of his future wife; but as

kadines can be bought at pleasure, if mistaken in his choice he is allowed by law to divorce and try his luck again.

Nothing can be prettier than the Valley of the Sweet Waters. No wonder the Turks love it. Homely green woods open out on close hills, and there is a lovely kiosk, around which the company congregates in kaleidoscopic masses.

Near by I see a man in a turban, dressed in white from head to foot, another in red, and Greeks in embroidered vests and full white drawers down to the feet. The quality of the personage is shown by the richness of the weapons thrust into the scarfed waist, but generally the long European surtout of dark cloth is worn with the fez, especially by the swells known as 'Young Turkey.'

The ladies, who loll about with the air of people who know they are looked at, are high-cheeked and broad-faced, brilliantly rouged on lip and cheeks, with dark circles under the eyes, giving a hard fixed expression; yet, when skilfully done, making them show out well under the white veil, and imparting a bewildering affectation of freshness and brilliancy, when perhaps little really exists.

One Turkish woman is wonderfully like another in look and movement—poor things, of course they are conventional!—save that even rouge and white enamel cannot make an old one young.

There were at least a hundred women in various groups in the most brilliant *ferejeh*, pink, blue, purple and red, about the kiosk. Stripes were much favoured, but the most distinguished were all in white.

Parties of gentlemen continually land from the boats, and assemble at due distance, while the ladies, exceedingly restless, and continually changing places, trip about with a considerable show of ankle. Others did not leave their caïques at all, but only looked on. Certainly, as a whole they are charming.

The shade, the trees, the rural stream with its gay freights, the grave immovable faces of the men—for whatever they thought, they did not show it—set off the groups admirably.

An officer in the gold-braided jacket of an Albanian adds colour to the scene, and a Turkish lady in white satin, standing on a carpet attended by two slaves also in white, makes her genuflexions with extreme zest; but why she should have selected for the purpose so very public a spot I could not conceive. Nobody, however, appears to notice her, stooping over and over again with her forehead to the earth, and then raising herself up erect as an arrow. When she has done, the slaves fold up the carpet, and she retreats to her caïque.

Then there was another wave of brilliant colour from a new arrival of ladies, to say

nothing of the boatmen. Whence they get these brilliant cottons—yellow figured with red, porcelain blue, magenta, scarlet—I cannot think.

. . . . . .

Then to tea at Kandili in the large Turkish room, sweet with palms and flowers, and to return late in the evening, under the moon.

It was so hot, I never had courage to return to the city, but bade adieu to Constantinople from the deck of the Ambassador's launch, and steamed by Vienna home into the Western world.

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